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PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

/A

TREATISE SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR
YOUNG MEN.

BY
Stephens
JOHN S. C. ABBOTT,

II
/AUTHOR OF

"THE MOTHER AT HOME," "THE CHILD AT HOME," "LIFE OF NAPOLEON,"
"HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION," ETC.

"Oh how glorious to be conscious
Of a growing power within,
Stronger than the rallying forces
Of a charged and marshal'd sin."

/

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TO

THE YOUNG MEN OF THE UNITED STATES,

WHO, WITH SUCH ENTHUSIASM, HAVE VOLUNTEERED FOR THE DEFENSE
OF THEIR IMPERILED COUNTRY, THIS VOLUME IS

Affectionately Inscribed

BY THEIR FRIEND AND GRATEFUL FELLOW-COUNTRYMAN,

JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.



P R E F A C E.

THERE are many young men, thoughtless upon the subject of religion, who can hardly be induced to read our standard works upon Christianity. These pages have been written with special reference to such persons, hoping to interest them in themes the most ennobling and sublime the human mind can conceive. Whether the attempt shall prove a success or a failure the result only can show.

I have written mainly from my own experience—from the solace which Christianity has afforded me in the battle of life, and which both history and biography instruct me it has afforded thousands of others, in various ages and in remote lands.

There may be *error* in these pages, but *heresy* there is none. Truly has Milton said,

“Heresy is in the will and choice, professedly against Scripture. Error is against the will, in misunderstanding the Scripture after all sincere endeavors to understand it rightly. It is a human frailty to err, and no man is infallible here on earth.”

Therefore can I say with one of the ancients, “Err I may, but a heretic I will not be.” If the views of Christianity here presented—views which I have urged from the pulpit for twenty-five years—be not essentially correct, so as to be a safe guide to Heaven, then has my preaching been vain, and my faith is also vain, and I am yet in my sins.

JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.

HOWE STREET CHURCH,
New Haven, Conn.

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PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS IT TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

The College Student.—Conversation in a Boat.—Eleonora: a poor Sinner.—The Battle of Life.—No Cross, no Crown.—Penance.—The Cross of Self-denial.—The Prayer-meeting.—Christianity invites to Conflict, not Repose.—The Alarm at Lexington.—The Crusades.—Sublimity of the Christian Conflict.

SEVERAL young men were one evening sitting around the fire in a college room, when the conversation turned upon the subject of religion. One of the young men said, perhaps with unintentional exaggeration, but with sincerity,

“If I could, by having my right arm cut off, be sure that I were a Christian, I would submit to the operation unhesitatingly. I have often tried to be a Christian, but in vain. I shall not try any more.”

Similar remarks are made every day. There are thousands who think that they really de-

sire to become Christians, but that there is some insuperable obstacle in the way. They assume—still with inward misgivings that it is not true—that they wish to become reconciled to God, but that God is not willing to become reconciled to them.

There are, however, exceptions. There are many young men of intelligence and of good reputation who will frankly avow that they do not wish to be Christians. The following scene, which actually occurred, as described, some years ago, will illustrate this state of mind.

Two young men who had just completed their collegiate education were sailing upon one of the most beautiful rivers of our country. It was a bright day in June. Those gorgeous clouds, which the sailors call “Canadian horsemen,” were advancing in squadrons from the northwest, and a gentle breeze pressed the sail and rippled the surface of the stream. One of these young men had just become, as he hoped, a Christian, and was anxious to induce his high-minded and talented companion to espouse the same cause. He, however, felt diffident about introducing the subject, and was afraid that, by abruptness, he might offend the sensitive feelings of his associate, and thus render religion repulsive.

He endeavored, therefore, to approach the theme gradually. As they leaned upon the stern of the boat, now talking, now musing, admiring the lovely scenery of the flowing river, wooded banks, and fleecy sky, the young Christian, whom we will call Henry, said to his companion, whom we will call George,

“How much like a ship that cloud looks off there upon our right! It seems as though, if we could but get into it, we could have a far pleasanter sail up there in the sky than we are enjoying down here upon the earth.”

“Yes,” George replied, “that would be a splendid balloon to float in, high above all the cities and mountains. What a magnificent prospect we could look down upon! The houses would dwindle into apparently little boxes, such as children play with. And the men, working in the fields and crowding the streets, would seem no larger than emmets.”

“And if we could only spread our sails,” Henry continued, “and be wafted far away, floating beyond the sun, and coasting along the stars, which, like islands, are scattered through the immensities of space, what scenes of novelty and of sublimity would be opened before us!”

Both were silent for a moment, and then

George rejoined, "I have often thought how exciting it must be when a whale-ship, in the Pacific, comes in sight of a strange island, one which perhaps has never before been visited by a white man. The luxuriance of tropical vegetation, the huts of the natives, the strange aspect of naked savages, and their manners and customs, so different from any which have been thought of before, must seem like the vision of a dream."

"It must indeed be so," Henry rejoined. "And yet the scenes which will be opened before us when we leave this world must be infinitely more wonderful and sublime. I am never weary of looking up in the evening to the stars, those mansions of God, and wondering what kind of worlds they are, what the aspect and character of their inhabitants, and what the nature of their employments and pleasures. I believe that they are all happy worlds, like Eden, occupied by angel spirits, and that the Christian, after death, will be a welcome guest upon them all. What a sublime thought it is that we shall have infinity to explore, and eternity to do it in!"

"You are growing visionary, Henry," was the prompt reply of George. "We do not know much about any other world than this,

or any other state of existence than that which we now enjoy. I think that we had better confine our thoughts to the practical scenes around us."

"Surely," Henry replied, "we can not doubt that the Bible is true; and that informs us that this life is merely a state in which we are to prepare for another and a nobler existence. If we love God, and become in character like God, as he has revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ, we shall be received to Heaven. Then we become God's sons and heirs, and, as such, the universe is our inheritance; then all these worlds which we see in the evening sky, and millions upon millions more which even the telescope has not revealed to us, will be just as much our home as we are at home in our own fathers' houses here on earth."

Again there was a pause, which was not interrupted until George replied, in words uttered slowly and deliberately, "Well, it may be so, for aught I know, and it may not be so, for aught I know. We can not tell where we were one hundred years ago, and as little can we tell where we shall be one hundred years hence. We suddenly find ourselves existing in this world. We are soon to leave it to go I know not where; perhaps to return to the same non-

existence from whence we came. The past, before our birth, is all dark, and the future, after our death, is equally so."

"It does not appear so to me," Henry rejoined. "We know that there is a God, for the universe could not exist without a maker. We know that we ought to love God, and do that which our conscience tells us to be right, and to refrain from doing that which conscience declares to be wrong. The Bible only urges us, by the most powerful of conceivable motives, thus to live, doing every thing that is right and nothing that is wrong. It also shows us how, when we have done wrong, we can obtain forgiveness. Our own hearts assure us that such teachings must be true. And *I* am determined to try to live according to the instructions of the Bible, to do every thing which I think will please God, and to do nothing which will be displeasing to him; then, while I live, I shall have the joy of an approving conscience; when I die I shall be cheered by the conviction that I have done every thing that I could to prepare for death, and in the spirit-land I believe that my heavenly Father will receive me, and make me as one of his angels."

Again there was a long pause, during which there probably was a struggle in the mind of

George between the consciousness of truth and the wicked disposition to live without God. It may have been the moment, in the soul's conflict, when the destinies of that soul were settled forever. The silence at length was broken as George replied, in tones of deliberation and firmness,

"Very well ; you may do as you choose. I have thought of this subject not a little ; and I have made up my mind that while I am in this world I will live for this world, and for this world alone. When I die, if I find that I am introduced to any other state of existence, I will do the best I can there."

Here the conversation was dropped, and was never again resumed. The two young men soon separated, and went forth to encounter the temptations and the toils of life. After thirty years of conflict with disappointment and adversity, George, in a distant land, with no friend at his dying pillow, sank into the grave. Perhaps in those last sad hours he looked up in prayer to his heavenly Father, and sought that godliness which hath promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.

This incident shows conclusively that there are some persons who have no wish to be Christians. They deliberately form the resolve

to let that question alone. Of such there is but little hope. It is probable, however, that the great majority of those who will read this book often express the desire to make their peace with God, and often think that they do earnestly wish to be the disciples of the Savior.

What, then, is it to be a Christian? It is to try to please God in every thing, according to the teachings of the Bible and of one's conscience; to repent of all the wrong we have done, and to ask God's forgiveness for the sake of Christ, who has died for us. Christianity is the same in all hearts. Persons may differ in education, in intelligence, in wealth, in rank, in the forms and ceremonies to which they are accustomed, but in this all Christians are alike; they pray for forgiveness in the name of Jesus, and *try* to please God in every thing. Sometimes they may think that they are doing right when they are doing wrong; but God will readily forgive all such sins of ignorance, for it is written, "He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust."

Even in the darkest ages of the world we find many most attractive examples of genuine piety. Through cloistered glooms and the accumulated moss of superstitions, we see beam-

ing forth in many a disciple the gentle, loving, devoted spirit of Christ.

About one hundred and sixty years ago there was in the heart of Germany a young duchess, Eleonora, residing in the court of her father, Philip, the elector palatine. In childhood she became a Christian—an earnest and warm-hearted Christian, longing for the love of God, and eager to make any sacrifice and to practice any self-denial which she thought would prove acceptable to him. Guided by the teachings of her spiritual instructors, who, though doubtless sincere, had ingrafted upon the precepts of the Bible the traditions and superstitions of that dark age, she was taught to deprive herself of almost every innocent gratification, and to practice upon her fragile frame all the severities of an anchorite. Celibacy was especially commended to her as a virtue peculiarly grateful to God, and she consequently declined all solicitations for her hand.

Leopold, the widowed Emperor of Germany, sent a magnificent retinue to the palace of the grand elector, and solicited Eleonora for his bride. It was the most brilliant match Europe could furnish. But Eleonora, notwithstanding all the importunities of her parents, rejected the proffered crown. As the emperor urged

his plea, the conscientious maiden, that she might render herself personally unattractive to him, neglected her dress, and exposed herself unbonneted to the sun and the wind. She thus succeeded in repelling his suit, and the emperor married Claudia of the Tyrol.

The elector palatine was one of the most powerful of the minor princes of Europe, and his court, in gayety and splendor, rivaled even that of the emperor. Eleonora was compelled to be a prominent actor in the gorgeous saloons of her father's palace, and to mingle with the festive throng in all their pageants of pleasure.

But her heart was elsewhere. Several hours every day were sacredly devoted to prayer and religious reading. She kept a minute journal, in which she scrupulously recorded and condemned her failings. She visited the sick in lowly cottages, and with her own hands performed the most self-denying duties required at the bedside of pain and death.

After the lapse of three years Claudia died, and again the widowed emperor sought the hand of Eleonora. Her spiritual advisers now urged that it was her duty to accept the imperial alliance, since upon the throne she could render herself so useful in extending the influence of the Church. Promptly she yielded to

the voice of duty, and, charioted in splendor, was conveyed a bride to Vienna. But her Christian character survived this fearful ordeal, and remained unchanged. She carried the penance and self-sacrifice of the cloister into the voluptuousness of the palace.

The imperial table was loaded with every luxury; but Eleonora, the empress, drank only cold water, and ate of fare as humble as could be found in any peasant's hut. On occasions of state it was needful that she should be dressed in embroidered robes of purple and of gold. But, to prevent any possibility of the risings of pride, her dress and jewelry were so arranged, with sharp brads pricking the flesh, that she was kept in a state of constant suffering. Thus she endeavored, while discharging, with the utmost fidelity, all the duties of a wife and an empress, to be ever reminded that life is but probation. These mistaken austerities, which were caused by the darkness of the age in which she lived, only show how sincere and unreserved was her consecration to God. The pure gold shines lustrous through the dross mingled with it.

When Eleonora attended the Opera with the emperor, which she frequently was constrained to do, she took with her the Psalms of David,

bound to resemble the books of the performance, and thus unostentatiously endeavored to shield her mind from the profane and indelicate allusions with which the operas of those days were filled, and from which, as yet, they are by no means purified.

For the benefit of her subjects, she translated the Psalms into German verse, and also translated into German several other books of a devotional character. Often she was seen with packages of garments and baskets of food entering the cottages of the poor peasantry around her country palace, ministering, like an angel of mercy, to all their wants.

At length her husband was taken sick, and lingered through severe pangs on his dying bed. Eleonora watched at his pillow with all the assiduity of a Sister of Charity. She hardly abandoned her post for a moment by day or by night. To all his wants she administered with her own hands, and at last closed his eyes as he slept in death. She survived her husband fifteen years, devoting herself with untiring self-sacrifice through all this period personally to the instruction of the ignorant, to nursing the sick, to feeding and clothing the poor. All possible luxury she discarded, and endeavored, as closely as possible, to imitate

her Savior, who had not where to lay his head. Her death was like the slumber of a child who sobs itself asleep on its mother's bosom. At her express request her funeral was unattended with any display; and she directed that there should be inscribed upon her tombstone simply the words

ELEONORA:

A POOR SINNER.

The date only was added: Died January 17, 1770.

This is the true spirit of religion, though there be blended with it some of the imperfections which pertain to our frail nature. But God, who, like as a father pitieth his children, pitieth them that fear him, assures us that "He knoweth our frame, that he remembereth that we are dust." This spirit, modified by outward circumstances, is essentially, in all cases, the spirit of the Christian, and this is the nature of the Christian conflict.

Every man is conscious, from his personal observation and his own experience, that life is a battle-field. We see the indications of this conflict in our neighbors. Some are growing better. Their opinions upon all subjects are becoming more healthy. They are forsaking bad associates and influences for good ones.

We know that in their bosoms there is a double struggle, first against their own inward propensities, flesh warring against the spirit, and, secondly, the external struggle against companionship and habits. The ties which bind a man to his associates, his political partizanship, his habits of life, are often fearfully strong. It requires a struggle to sever these ties, and often great is the victory when it is accomplished.

There is a rich reward offered in this life, and a still richer reward in the life to come, to all who will contend manfully for that which is right and true. And there is *ignominy* in the desire to secure the reward of the victory without sharing the peril of the battle. No man would deem it honorable, on the field of earthly conflict, to feign sickness, to hide in his tent, to shelter himself from all danger while the battle raged, and then, so soon as the struggle is terminated, to steal from his hiding-place and claim his share of the rewards of a victory achieved entirely by the energies of others.

And can it then be honorable, in this great moral conflict, which is now shaking the world to its foundations—a conflict which requires the highest display of that *moral courage*, which is an infinitely more rare and noble virtue than physical courage—can it be honorable for one

to refuse to take his share in the conflict, and yet be eager to grasp the rewards of the Christian victory—rewards which are the appropriate allotments of true and faithful soldiers of the Cross?

“Sure I must fight if I would reign.”

When a man says that he will be a Christian, but that he will be one so secretly that no one will suspect it; that he will not openly acknowledge the Savior; that he will not take his position in the ranks where Christ's disciples stand, beneath the banner of the Cross, swept by the artillery of a hostile world, but that he will keep far from danger, and follow the army at a distance, so as to be ready to rush in after the battle is ended, and claim a share of the victory—there is, I say, in this a something which every mind of honorable instincts will declare to be ignoble.

A man of unusually energetic character was on his dying bed. From childhood he had enjoyed religious privileges, and yet had persistently rejected the Savior, at times with pretended skepticism. In the darkened chamber of death he was left companionless and comfortless. There was nothing in the past for him to reflect upon with pleasure, and the fu-

ture was all gloom. His pastor called upon him and entreated him, even in this last, eleventh hour, to take refuge in the Savior. The dying man fixed his eyes upon his pastor and said, in words which Milton might well have put into the lips of some fallen son of the morning,

“No; it seems too contemptibly mean. When I might have been useful as a Christian, I would not be one. Now that I can do nothing, and am just going into eternity, to go to Christ merely to be saved seems too *contemptibly mean*.”

There is a cross which every one who would be a Christian must take up. It is never the cross of self-imposed suffering, but the cross of patient submission or active duty. Papal Rome has imposed penances, pilgrimages, cloistered glooms, seclusion, mortifications of the flesh, flagellations, and has thus endeavored to soothe the cry of conscience. These self-inflicted tortures, doubtless, in many cases in the darker ages of the world, have been well intended, but they find no warrant in Scripture, and are abhorrent to reason.

The Flagellants of the Papal Church scourge themselves with keen cutting lashes until the blood drips from their shoulders; but this is a

cross man has imposed, not God. The cross which Christ enjoins us to take up is the cross of self-denial for the accomplishment of good.

The young man who has long lived without God, who has become intimately associated with irreligious companions, often finds that great self-denial is necessary to break away from those associates and to choose Christian friends. This, then, is the cross he must take up.

It requires no little self-sacrifice for him to appear before the Church and ask for admission; to relate his Christian experience, in describing those dealings with him by which God has led him to the Savior; and then, before the congregation, to make public profession of his faith in Christ, confessing that he is a sinner, that he is penitent for sin, and that he will endeavor henceforth to live a Christian life. This is the cross he must take up, alike useful to himself and important in its influence upon others.

He attends a prayer-meeting. Perhaps not a few of his former companions are present to see if he will dare to pray before them, to speak as freely for Christ and religion as he has been accustomed to speak on other themes. It requires no little moral courage for him to be true to duty in such a presence. And yet a

few words from his lips, though uttered with a stammering tongue; a few petitions of prayer, though spoken in a voice choked and almost inaudible with emotion, will have more potency upon those hearts than even the most eloquent preaching of a Paul or an Apollos. This is the cross he must take up. Is not the reason manifest? It has been mainly by such influences that, through all time, the triumphs of Christianity have been achieved.

What a trial must it have been for Peter, the uneducated fisherman, to stand before all the learned men of ancient days, Romans, Greeks, and Jews, urging the claims of a religion which most of them regarded with contempt. What a fearful trial of moral courage was Paul exposed to when, abandoning his old associates, among whom he had been a ring-leader, he turned to men whom they regarded as ignorant and fanatical, and in market-places, in synagogues, in courts of justice, plead that cause which to the Jew was a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness! Yet this was the cross he was to lift. Manfully he took it up.

Though you can hardly find two individuals of similar personal history, still the spiritual cross we are all to bear is essentially the same. When, in the morning of our Revolution, the

church bells of Lexington, and Concord, and Cambridge were ringing the alarm, and couriers were galloping from post to post with the tidings that the invading army were on the march, the farmer abandoned the plow in the furrow, the mechanic threw aside his tools, the shopkeeper barred door and windows, the student dropped his books, and with one spirit they all rushed to the unfurled banner of their country's freedom. The spirit was the same, the self-denial essentially the same in one and all; and yet, perhaps, in no two cases were the external circumstances similar.

So, in espousing the cause of Christ, the old man, the young man, and the child, the rich and those not rich, the influential and those of but little influence, the mother and the maiden—all, all alike, must enter the Church of Christ ready to do any thing, every thing which may advance his cause. Religion is not a lolling-chair, with downy cushion and smoothly-adjusted rockers, in which one may recline and slumber. It is rather armor, strong armor of steel, with helmet, and cuirass, and buckler, with which one is to go out into the battle of life, the battle with inbred sin, the battle to win a lost world to holiness. This warfare can never cease till life shall cease. He who under-

standingly enlists under this banner says to himself,

“I have done at length with dreaming;
Henceforth, oh thou soul of mine,
Thou must gird on sword and gauntlet,
Waging warfare most divine.

Life is struggle, conflict, victory,
Wherefore should I slumber on,
With my forces all unmarshal'd,
With my weapons all undrawn?”

The Crusaders, in their attempt to win back the Holy Land by the energies of the sword, ever marched beneath the banner of the Cross. Every man in that unnumbered host looked with pride, and almost with adoration, upon those silken folds emblazoned with the emblem of his faith, and inscribed with the words, “*In hoc vinces, by this thou shalt conquer.*” This banner was ever his glory. It floated over every turret and battlement which he held. It was unfurled at every encampment. It led the advance in every onset; and in the hour of disaster and retreat, the broken, bleeding legions rallied around it as a treasure never to be relinquished but with life. It is recorded of a renowned standard-bearer of those days, Edward of Almeyda, that, having first lost his right arm and then his left, he grasped the flag with his teeth, and did not relax his gripe un-

til the cimeter of the foe cleft his head from crown to chin.

This should be the spirit of the Christian, this courage, heroism, endurance. Never be ashamed to acknowledge, defend, advocate your cause. Take up your banner and march beneath it, glorying in the noblest cause in which men or angels ever engaged. There have been many great battles fought upon this globe, renowned in history as deciding the destinies of empires. But these have all been as the play of children compared with that great moral battle now raging over this wide world. The arch enemy of mankind, all lost spirits, all godless men, are on one side; our heavenly Father, all the angels of heaven, and all good men are on the other. The final victory is a question only as to time. The banner of the Cross shall yet float upon every mountain and over every valley. The victorious armies of the Savior, earth being redeemed from sin and woe, shall yet make all skies resound with their acclaim. Would you share in this triumph, you must share in the conflict. No cross, no crown.

CHAPTER II.

WHY SHOULD I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

The Siberian Exile.—The Emigrant.—Departure for the Spirit-land.—The Testimony of Patriarchs.—Of Apostles.—Death of Sir Walter Scott.—Of Daniel Webster.—Of Talleyrand.—Remarkable Testimony of Napoleon.—The young Christian.—The mature Christian.—The dying Christian.—The Pilgrims.—An angelic Embassy.

THERE are many who assume that it is beneath the dignity of a strong-minded, intelligent man to devote himself to religious thought. They cherish the feeling that solicitude respecting a future world, and anxiety for the salvation of the soul, are irrational and fanatical. Let us look at this.

Imperial despotism consigns a family from sunny climes to Siberian exile—to the storms and ices of almost an eternal winter. Is it irrational for the husband and father to inquire, “What doom awaits me and mine in that frozen zone, which we are never to leave until our bodies are buried beneath its drifting snows?”

The peasant from the banks of the Danube or the castled Rhine gathers his household

around him to emigrate to a new world. In that distant home boundless prairies may sweep around him, or gigantic forests overshadow him with their gloom. Wild beasts may rage through his inclosures, or the savage bury the tomahawk in his brain. He leaves his cot in father-land to return to it no more forever. After traversing leagues of stormy ocean, and plunging hundreds of miles into the interior of an almost unexplored continent, he is to rear his cabin, and there struggle against life's stormy doom, till death shall summon him to the world of spirits.

And is it irrational for him to make all the preparation he can for this sojourn, though it be but temporary, in a new land?

Every man is soon to be an exile from his earthly abode. Every man is soon to emigrate from all the scenes, associations, friends of this his childhood's home, where he can only pass the briefest morning of his existence. You, reader, are to go far beyond planets, sun, stars, which even telescopic power has not revealed, to that central court where God sits enthroned, where the peerage of his empire are gathered, and where the New Jerusalem towers sublime, with its pavements of pearl and gates of gold.

There every one must go, no one can tell

how soon; perhaps next year or this, to-morrow or to-day. There you, reader, must go to await your trial and hear your doom. And we must not forget that God's empire has its prison as well as its palace—its realms of despair as well as its fields of bliss. In the world beyond the grave revelation gives us dim though appalling visions of lost spirits—Satan and his angels, who, reserved in chains under darkness,

“Converse with everlasting groans,

Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved, ages of hopeless end,”

as well as visions of the spirits of the just made perfect, who “mount exultant on triumphant wing,” and cause heaven's arches to resound with their songs of bliss. There you must go, reader, to dwell in the one world or the other, to be an angel or a fiend, and not for a few years only, but forever and forever.

Shall the exile be anxious to foresee his fate amid Siberian snows? Shall the emigrant, with wise foresight, provide for his Atlantic voyage, his inland journey, and for the perils of the frontier, where, after a few days, the prairie wind shall sigh over his grave? And shall not the child of immortality, who is surely destined to grope through death's dark valley, to be roused by the resurrection trump, to

stand at God's bar, to hear the sentence *welcome*, or the doom *depart*—shall he alone be unconcerned, and say that it is fanatical for a man to prepare to meet his God?

The wisest, bravest, best men earth has ever known have ever testified to the reasonableness of this solicitude. Shall we appeal to those patriarchs and prophets whose names, echoing through the halls of history, have survived all time's ravages? Empires, dynasties, busy generations have gone down to oblivion, but these great names grow more lustrous as the ages roll on. Noah testifies to us from his ark, surging on a shoreless sea; Abraham responds from Mount Moriah, with the sacrificial knife in his hand, and his son bound before him. Moses has inscribed his testimony upon every milestone of his pilgrimage, upon the tablets of the law, and upon that Pisgah's height from whence God took him. Elijah from his chariot of fire, and Enoch from his ascension clouds, shout back to earth their emphatic answer; and Daniel's reply is heard from the lion's den.

The apostles of our Savior, how earnest their utterance! Their eyes were ever turned to the celestial world; their ears were ever listening for angel voices. In trouble's most tempestuous days, in darkest nights of sorrow, in

deepest dungeons, and under lacerating stripes, anticipations of their heavenly home inspired and cheered them.

Who have been the truly great and good men of modern times—men who, in nobility of nature, command the homage of human hearts, and who have left behind them the impress of good deeds? Howard, the philanthropist; Sir Matthew Hale, the jurist; Milton, the poet; Wilberforce, the statesman: such are the men whose memory the world will not permit to die. These men, gigantic in their several attainments, were nerved to their daily toil by faith in the world to come. Look into the records of past history, and you shall hardly find a name embalmed in the affections of mankind which witnesseth not to the reasonableness of solicitude for the soul's salvation.

Through all time God's chosen children have lived as strangers and pilgrims upon earth. They were journeying ever to a land far away. Though often world-weary, wayworn, foot-sore, and covered with the dust of travel, still they struggled hopefully on, tottering beneath their burdens, through sickness and sufferings, till one by one they entered the heavenly gates.

Several years ago, Sir Walter Scott, who had charmed the world with his genius, was on a

dying bed. He had passed a troubled night in delirious slumber. As the morning sun shone into his chamber he awoke but to die. Every trace of delirium had disappeared, and his mind was unclouded. Raising his dying eye, and fixing it upon his son-in-law Lockhart, who sat by his bedside, he said,

"My dear son, I may have but a moment to speak to you. Be a good man; be virtuous, be religious. Be a good man," he repeated, with most solemn emphasis; "nothing else will give you any comfort when called to lie here."

Was Walter Scott a weak enthusiast? Is not this striking testimony? Will you not feel, reader, as he felt, when you come to die?

Daniel Webster, a few years ago, was reclining upon the pillow of death. His voice, entrancing the senate, had not only reverberated through our whole land, but, sweeping the Atlantic, had echoed along the mountains and through the valleys of the Old World. It was the hour of midnight, and no sound disturbed the silence of the dying chamber save the murmur of the wave, as it broke a few rods from the window upon the beach at Marshfield. The great statesman was dying. His earthly career was terminated. His spirit was just ready to wing its flight to that distant world

from whence it could never return. What are the thoughts which in this hour are struggling in his capacious mind? Hark! he speaks. Listen to those tones of death, in their almost supernatural solemnity:

“The pomp of heraldry, the pride of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e’er gave,
Alike await the inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

Again there is silence as of the tomb, and no penetration but that of God can scan the ponderings of the dying man. But hark! again he speaks, and in tones of still intenser emphasis.

“Show pity, Lord. O Lord, forgive;
Let a repenting rebel live.
Are not thy mercies large and free?
May not a sinner trust in thee?”

Do not these midnight, dying utterances reveal the deep solicitude of the soul? Never was more decisive testimony given than was uttered by this great statesman upon his dying bed of the emptiness of all pursuits but those which guide to heaven. “What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!” is the voice ever spoken when one stands at death’s door.*

* The writer has received these facts from a friend who was with the dying statesman the last four days and nights of his life.

Very touching was the dying testimony of Prince Talleyrand. Europe has perhaps produced no other diplomatist more crafty or successful. He so managed as to retain his ascendancy in the republic, the empire, and the kingdom. He passed unharmed through revolutions and counter-revolutions, through the overturning and reconstruction of thrones, and yet was one of the most prominent of the actors in every stirring scene. Satiated with opulence and glory, and having long outlived his generation, at eighty-three years of age he was prostrate on a dying bed.

As the spirit of the prince was slowly descending the dark valley, his thoughts retraced the stormy scenes of his stormy life—its conflicts, ambitions, successes, and disappointments—and, in harmony with the melancholy souvenirs of Solomon, declared all to be vanity and vexation of spirit. A taper burned dimly in the chamber. By the side of his bed there was a table, upon which was a paper and a pencil. He reached out his trembling hand, took the paper and pencil, and, in scarcely legible lines, inscribed the following as his dying testimony :

“Behold eighty-three years passed away! What cares, what agitations, what anxieties, what ill-will, what sad complications! and all

without other result save great fatigue of body and of mind, and a profound sentiment of discouragement with regard to the future, and disgust with regard to the past."

Surely such testimony is ample to show the folly of living for this world alone, and neglecting preparation for the world to come. Perhaps there has never been any testimony given upon this subject more impressive and more to the point than that uttered by Napoleon in the agony of Saint Helena.

"Every thing in Christ," said Napoleon to General Bertrand, "astonishes me. His birth and the history of his life; the profundity of his doctrines, which grapples the mightiest difficulties, and which is of those difficulties the most admirable solution; his Gospel, his advent, his empire, his march across the ages and realms—every thing is for me a prodigy, which plunges me into a reverie from which I can not escape, a mystery which I can neither deny nor explain.

"The nearer I approach, the more carefully I examine, every thing is above me; every thing remains grand, of a grandeur which overpowers. His religion is a revelation from an intelligence which certainly is not that of man.

"The Christian religion is neither ideology

nor metaphysics, but a practical rule, which directs the actions of man, corrects him, counsels him, and assists him in all his conduct. The Bible contains a complete series of facts and of historical men, to explain time and eternity, such as no other religion has to offer. I search in vain in history to find the similar of Jesus Christ, or any thing which can approach the Gospel. Neither history, nor humanity, nor the ages, nor nature can offer me any thing with which I am able to compare it or explain it. The more I consider the Gospel, the more I am assured that there is nothing there which is not above the march of events, and above the human mind.

“What happiness that book procures for those who believe it! Book unique, where the mind finds a moral beauty before unknown, and an idea of the Supreme superior even to that which the creation suggests. You speak of Cæsar, of Alexander, of their conquests, and of the enthusiasm they enkindled in the hearts of their soldiers; but can you conceive of a dead man making conquests with an army entirely devoted to his memory? My armies have forgotten me, even while living, as the Carthaginian army forgot Hannibal.

“Can you conceive a Cæsar the eternal em-

peror of the Roman senate, and from the depths of his mausoleum governing the empire, watching over the destinies of Rome? Such is the power of the God of the Christians. Such is the perpetual miracle of the progress of the faith and of the government of his Church. Nations pass away, thrones crumble, but the Church remains. What, then, is the power which has protected the Church, thus assailed by the furious billows of rage and the hostility of ages? Where is the arm which for eighteen hundred years has protected the Church from so many storms which have threatened to engulf it?

“Truth should embrace the universe. Such is Christianity; the only religion which destroys sectional prejudice; the only one which proclaims the unity and the absolute brotherhood of the whole human family; the only one which is purely spiritual; the only one which assigns to all, without distinction, for a true country the bosom of the Creator, God. Christ proved that he was the son of the Eternal by his disregard of *time*. All his doctrines signify one only and the same thing, *Eternity*.

“Moreover, in propounding mysteries, Christ is harmonious with Nature, which is profoundly mysterious. From whence do I come?

Whither do I go? Who am I? Human life is a mystery in its origin, its organization, and its end. In man and out of man, in Nature, every thing is mysterious. And can one wish that religion should not be mysterious? The creation and the destiny of the world are an unfathomable abyss, as also is the creation and destiny of each individual. Christianity at least does not evade these great questions. It meets them boldly; and its doctrines are a solution of them for every one who believes.

“The Gospel possesses a secret virtue, a mysterious efficacy; a warmth which penetrates and soothes the heart. One finds in meditating upon it that which one experiences in contemplating the heavens. The Gospel is not a book; it is a living being, with an action, a power, which invades every thing which opposes its extension. Behold it upon this table—this book surpassing all others” (here the emperor solemnly placed his hand upon it). “I never omit to read it, and every day with the same pleasure.

“Nowhere is there to be found such a series of beautiful ideas, admirable moral maxims, which defile like the battalions of a celestial army, and which produce in our soul the same emotion which one experiences in contempla-

tingt he infinite expanse of the skies, resplendent in a summer's night with all the brilliance of the stars. Not only is our mind absorbed, it is controlled, and the soul can never go astray with this book for its guide. Once master of our spirit, the faithful Gospel loves us. God even is our friend, our father, and truly our God. The mother has no greater care for the infant whom she nurses.

“What a proof of the divinity of Christ! With an empire so absoluté, he has but one single end—the spiritual melioration of individuals, the purity of conscience, the union to that which is true, the holiness of the soul. He lights up the flame of love, which consumes self-love, which prevails over every other love. The founders of other religions never conceived of this mystical love, which is the essence of Christianity, and which is beautifully called *charity*.

“I have so inspired multitudes that they would die for me. God forbid that I should form any comparison between the enthusiasm of the soldier and Christian charity, which are as unlike as their cause. But, after all, my presence was necessary; the lightning of my eye, my voice, a word from me, then the sacred fire was kindled in their hearts. I do indeed

possess the secret of this magical power which lifts the soul, but I could never impart it to any one. Now that I am at St. Helena, alone, chained upon this rock, who wins empires for me? Who are the courtiers of my misfortune? Where are my friends? Yes, two or three, whom your fidelity immortalizes; you share, you console my exile."

Here the voice of the emperor trembled with emotion, and for a moment he was silent. He then continued:

"Yes, our life once shone with all the brilliance of the diadem and the throne. But disasters came; the gold gradually became dim. The ruin of misfortune and outrage, with which I am daily deluged, has effaced all the brightness. We are merely lead now, General Bertrand, and soon I shall be in my grave.

"Such is the fate of great men! So it was with Cæsar and Alexander. And I, too, am forgotten. And mark what is soon to become of me! I die before my time, and my dead body, too, must return to the earth to become the food for worms. Behold the destiny, near at hand, of him who has been called the great Napoleon! What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal reign of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, adored, and which is ex-

tending all over the earth! Is this to die? Is it not rather to live? The death of Christ! It is the death of God!"

But a few days before his death, when helpless upon his dying bed, the emperor sent for the Abbé Vignali. A movable altar was placed at the bedside. All retired except the abbé. Napoleon then, in silence and solitude, received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. After the solemn ordinance, Count Montholon returned to the room. The tranquil tones of the emperor's voice and the placid expression of his countenance indicated the serenity of his spirit. He conversed a few moments on religious subjects, and peacefully fell asleep.

"Open the window, Marchand," said the emperor to his valet, as he awoke in the morning; "open it wide, that I may breathe the air, the good air which the good God has made."

Such is the testimony which comes pouring in upon us, emphatic and profuse, that it is wise for man to prepare to meet his God. Turn where we may, we find this testimony corroborated. Ask the young convert, who has but just enlisted under the banner of the Cross, what his experience is of serving Christ. An unwonted lustre beams in his eye. A hitherto inexperienced joy thrills his heart. His feet

are already upon the delectable mountains, and far off he espies the turrets and the pinnacles of the celestial city, radiant with eternal sunshine. The plumage of angel pinions glitters in the air. The harmony of seraphic voices is wafted to him from choirs above. The intervening way seems short, and, though there are valleys to be descended and heights to be climbed, an assuring voice whispers to his heart,

“Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

Shall we ask the aged Christian to give his testimony? He has borne the heat and burden of the day, and is drawing near his journey's end. With a tremulous voice he will surely testify essentially as follows:

I have seen my sunny days of youth and hope, when in the May-morning of life the flowers bloomed, and birds sang, and the sky was serene. Friends encircled me with their love. Competence was mine, and in a happy home I found all the joy earth can give. My Christian hopes gilded and magnified all this happiness. From my fireside here I could look forward to a still more favored home in heaven.

But hours of darkness came. Cares, troubles,

losses, vast embarrassments in business oppressed my soul with sorrowful days and sleepless nights. But oh! what a solace did my Christian hopes then afford me. My property was melting away, but that was only an earthly possession. I had a sure and a safe investment in heaven, which no financial crisis could reach. Death came to my dwelling. Hour after hour I watched at the bedside of loved ones about to be taken from me. The cheek became more pallid, the eye more dim, the frame more emaciate. It did seem as though my heart would break in those hours of overwhelming grief. But my Christian hopes sustained me, and took from death its sting, and from the grave its victory.

And when the funeral procession left my door, and when I stood by the side of the grave, and heard the sods falling upon the coffin, faith, as an angelic comforter, pointed me to those realms of glory to which the sainted one had gone. And now, when I think of my own death, so near, and of my speedy reunion with the loved and the lost in heaven, I would not renounce the solace which my Christian hopes afford for all the honors and all the opulence of ten thousand worlds.

Would you inquire of the dying Christian

as to his testimony? Go with me to his bedside. The battle is fought, the race is run. The long, dark night of conflict is passing away, and the brightness of an unclouded eternity is dawning upon his soul. His pulse is slowly ebbing, his heart feebly beating, his spirit just on the wing for its happy home. Dying Christian, what say you? Is it wise for the living to prepare to meet God?

That pallid cheek is again flushed; that dimmed eye again becomes lustrous; that faltering tongue is unloosed, as, clear, distinct, and full, it exclaims to the guardian angels hovering around,

“Lend, lend your wings—I mount, I fly:

Oh grave, where is thy victory? Oh death, where is thy sting?”

“Oh, my sister! my sister!” wrote Dr. Payson, just before he breathed his last, “could you but know what awaits the Christian—could you only know so much as I know, you could not refrain from rejoicing, and even leaping for joy. Labors, trials, troubles would be nothing. You would rejoice in afflictions, and glory in tribulations, and, like Paul and Silas, sing God’s praises in darkest nights and deepest dungeons.”

We have read of caravans of pilgrims who,

after weeks and months of weary travel, approach the Holy City. They have been drenched by storms, burned by blazing suns, choked with the dust of the desert, and pinched with hunger. Their shoes are worn out, their garments soiled and tattered, their feet blistered, and their tottering limbs can hardly sustain their steps. Through sleepless nights, and through days of weakness and pain, ever waging fierce warfare against assailing foes, they have toiled painfully on, and are now near the end of their pilgrimage.

The sun is just sinking behind the hills of Lebanon, and night will soon settle upon Palestine. The pilgrims ascend an eminence, and lo! Jerusalem is before them. Its turrets, towers, pinnacles, and domes all blaze in golden splendor, reflecting the rays of the setting sun. A scene of almost supernatural enthusiasm ensues.

"Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" is shouted from hot and blistered lips; "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" is echoed through the long lines of the rear. The lame, the fainting, the dying, are animated with new life as they rush forward to catch a glimpse of that sacred city where the Savior bled and died. Tears gush from all eyes. Some, almost swooning with joy,

cast themselves upon the ground and breathe a silent prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving. Some throw their arms into the air, and shout wildly, in the ecstasy of their rapture, "Hallelujah! hallelujah!" All past fatigues, perils, sufferings are forgotten. Their pilgrimage is ended, their goal is gained.

But oh! when the pilgrim of earth arrives within sight of the celestial city—a sight so brilliant that no mortal eye undazzled can look upon it—as he gazes upon the splendor of the metropolis of God's empire, and listens to the music of its seraphic choirs, and knows that in that city the Savior has a mansion prepared for him, all in readiness and awaiting his arrival, where he shall rest in purity, and peace, and joy forever, can language tell his emotions? The tongue falters, and speech itself breaks down in the vain attempt to give utterance to such joys.

But could we go one step farther, and appeal to the sainted ones who are already in heaven, how emphatic would be their testimony! Faith reveals to us many such a band, glittering in angelic plumage, radiant with seraphic beauty, going in and out at celestial mansions, and taking glorious pastime on the hills of God. Such a band appeared to the

shepherds of Bethlehem, announcing the birth of our Savior. Were heaven to commission one of its choirs of redeemed ones to earth, who can doubt as to the nature of the testimony they would render.

We can see them, in imagination, winging their flight down from the empyrean on this embassy of love. Their wings rustle in the air, as, breathing celestial odors, and luminous with heaven's splendor, they hover above us. Then, in blending harmony, their voices burst into one of the songs of heaven. Their liquid notes, now melting away into the softest symphonies of love, and now soaring into the sublimest hallelujahs of triumph, entrance every listening ear. Their song is of redeeming love, the Babe of Bethlehem, Gethsemane, Pilate's hall, and Calvary; the Resurrection, the Ascension, the eternal Advocacy.

"These," they sing, "are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more; for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Again their wings gleam in the midst of the glory which surrounds them, and, directing their flight toward their happy home, they disappear from our sight. Surely the testimony is complete and overwhelming that it is wise in this life to make preparation for the life which is to come.

CHAPTER III.

HOW SHALL I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Moral Courage.—Soldiers of the Cross.—Family Prayer.—The Sea-captain.—Heroism of young Ladies.—Remark of John Randolph.—Success the Reward of Labor.—Entire Consecration to Duty makes Duty pleasant.—Nature of the religious Life.—Seek the best Religion.—Frankness and Sincerity.—William Wirt.—William Wilberforce.

THE cheapest and most vulgar of all earthly virtues is physical courage. The streets of any city in Christendom may be raked, and, from the collection of its most debased and brutal population, we may, with sufficient training, form fierce soldiers, who will leap the ramparts of the Malakoff and the Redan as regardless of shot and shell as if they were paper pellets.

Moral courage is a very different virtue. A sailor-boy, as he leaves his parental home for the perils and temptations of the sea, has received from his mother a Bible, with the promise that he will daily read it, with prayer. The fore-castle of the ship is filled with the profane, the ribald, the scorners. Night comes, the first

night of the sailor-boy on the deep. The godless crew around him, with revelry and inebriation, are playing cards upon a chest. The sailor-boy, with the calm heroism of another prophet Daniel, takes out his Bible, reads a few verses, and then kneels by the side of his hammock and offers to God a short and silent prayer. There is first a look of astonishment, and then a wild burst of blasphemy and derision.

This is moral courage. This is a battle which tries a man's soul. This is a test of character which decides the question whether the spirit be of celestial or of earthly mould. You can find ten thousand men with bull-dog recklessness of danger, where you can find one man with this Christian heroism, this virtue of seraphic fibre, this seal of heaven's nobility. This was the courage of Abdiel, as described by Milton,

“Faithful found among the faithless,
Faithful only he.”

This was the courage of Noah, as he built the ark, breasting the scorn of the world, billows far more formidable than the surges of the Deluge. This was the courage of Lot, encountering assaults of obloquy and derision more appalling than the fiery flood.

Though the soldier of the Cross formerly had occasion for the exercise of physical as well as moral courage, braving the terrors of the dungeon, the lions' den, the scaffold, and the stake, now it is generally moral courage only which he is called to exercise. It is easy for any government, with money, to enlist one hundred thousand soldiers in three months, who will, fearless as wolves, rush through ditch, and over rampart, and up to the cannon's mouth on any field of blood.

But when God sends His recruiting sergeants into the world to engage soldiers of the Cross, thousands are afraid to enlist. What do they fear?—that cavalry will trample them down? No! That shells will blow them into the air, or canister and grape tear them limb from limb? No! Do they fear the toilsome march, the rain-drenched bivouac, the dreary hospital? No! They understand full well that Christ's service exposes them to none of these sufferings. What is it, then, they fear? It is *opinion*; nothing but opinion. Do you wish to test this? If, then, you are a father of a family, and have never established a family altar, assemble your wife and children around you this night, and say to them,

“I have lived too long without God, and can

do so no more. To-night I am determined to commence family prayer and a Christian life."

Read a few verses in the Bible, bow the knee, and implore God's forgiveness and blessing. There are many men who had rather lead a forlorn hope than do this; so much cheaper is physical than moral courage. Many a man will dare to read the Bible and to pray if he is sure that no one will see him or hear him; but he perhaps had almost rather die than to be *detected* upon his knees in prayer or with God's word in his hands.

Are you a young man? Say frankly to your companions, "I am resolved henceforth to try to live a Christian life." Go to the prayer-meeting. Openly avow there your resolution; ask others to join you in your heavenward journey; implore the prayers of Christians, and then pray yourself as well as you can, no matter how poorly it may be. No one will harm you, or even insult you. What do you fear?

There are many young men who could more easily be induced to head a charge upon Lucknow or Delhi than to perform this act of Christian heroism. The writer well remembers the conflict he passed through ere he could offer his first prayer in public, a young man twenty

years of age. A sea-captain, a bold, resolute man, who for years had braved all the storms of the ocean, said,

“The hardest thing I ever did was to commence family prayer. I returned from church one Sabbath evening resolved that I would delay the duty no longer. For some time I walked up and down before my door, unable to summon courage to enter. At last I went in, half hoping that my family had retired. There sat my wife and daughters. The perspiration started from every pore of my body. I took up the Bible, and said, with a trembling voice, that I felt that we must not live any longer as a family without God. I then read a few verses, and in the most bewildering agitation offered the first prayer ever heard at my fireside. I thought that my daughters and my wife would despise me; that they would say,

“ ‘What, such a man as you, such a sinner as you are, have prayers in your family!’

“But my daughters came with their eyes full of tears, and, more affectionately than ever before, bade me good-night. My soul was full. I was so happy that I could not sleep.”

This is moral courage. Such its cross and its crown.

There was a wealthy family residing in their

home of luxury, who had long been living without God. In a season of special religious interest the two daughters became Christians. The father also had his attention aroused, and for several weeks was in a state of great anxiety. His pale cheek, his silence, his air of dejection, proclaimed the struggle in his mind. Still he found no relief. He had not moral courage to commence family prayer. This was the one thing he lacked. The daughters watched the progress of their father with deep solicitude, and well understood the nature of the cross which he was unwilling to take up.

It was a cold winter's evening. The fire burned brightly in the grate, and the wind moaned pensively as the hour for retiring arrived. The family sat at the fireside in silence; the father struggling with those mysterious fears which repel from duty, and the daughters fully conscious of the emotions which agitated his heart. At length one of the daughters, by previous concert with her sister, looked up and said,

"Father, are you willing that sister and I should conduct family prayers to-night?"

The father, astonished, bewildered, scarcely knowing what he said, replied, "Why yes, my child."

Her hand was already upon the Bible, and the Psalm selected: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Without a moment's delay she read the beautiful passage, and immediately, both kneeling, the other sister, in tones almost inaudible through the intensity of her feelings, implored God's blessing upon the household. It was the first prayer in the family. It brought the father to a prompt decision, and thus, perhaps, opened to him the gates of Heaven.

Maria Theresa was heroic in leading to the charge the bold barons of Hungary. Joan of Arc was heroic, driving the invading foe in wild rout before her banners. Madam Roland was heroic, singing the songs of liberty as she ascended the scaffold. But more pure, lofty, and celestial than either of these acts of heroism was the moral courage displayed by these Christian maidens. Angels must have contemplated reverentially and lovingly the scene. And when father and daughters shall meet, with robe, and crown, and harp, in the realms of immortality, then shall be truly appreciated the grandeur of this Christian heroism.

"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force."

"I had read," said John Randolph, "that text five hundred times before I had the slightest conception of its true meaning—that no lukewarm seeker can ever become a real Christian." How simple this truth! how forceful the utterance! If you wish to be a Christian, you must make an effort.

Nothing of value can be attained without effort. Success is the result of toil. The farmer, the mechanic, the scholar, the artist, must purchase success in their various callings at the price of self-sacrifice and persevering industry. Newton weighs the planets, and pursues the comet in its eccentric path through abysses of space which no telescope can penetrate. Is this genius alone? No; he says it is work, hard work, night and day, day and night.

Webster speaks in the Senate, and his eloquent words sway the minds of millions. Whence this power? Is it instinctive? No. "Whoever has worked hard," says Webster, "no man ever worked harder."

One of the most eloquent passages in the English language is Lord Brougham's peroration in defense of Queen Caroline. As we read its impassioned flow, it seems as if it must have gushed unstudied and instinctive from the

glowing heart; but Lord Brougham, in a letter to Macaulay, says,

“I composed the peroration of my speech for the queen after reading and repeating Demosthenes for three or four weeks, and I composed it twenty times over at least.”

Rufus Choate delivers a eulogy upon Daniel Webster at Dartmouth College. It is regarded as one of the most brilliant efforts of human intellect. It is read with equal admiration on both sides of the Atlantic. Was this the result of accident—a sudden flash of inspiration? No; every moment of leisure he could secure for a whole year was devoted to that labor. A choice library of ten thousand volumes was ransacked for suggestive imagery and thought; and all this effort was made with a mind which had been disciplined with the most incessant and intense application for the third of a century.

It is by toil, toil, toil, that the mechanic, who commences with hammering stone, closes his career by chiseling statuary which enchants the world. It is not the loungeur in the streets of Florence and Rome whose creations attain an earthly immortality. Praxiteles and Phidias, Powers and Crawford, are men who anticipated the dawning of the sun, and who grew pale as

the midnight torch glimmered over their marble blocks.

Who are the mechanics who rise from apprenticeship to be master-builders? Who the shop-boys who become opulent merchants? Who the hired laborers who acquire homes, and comforts, and respect? Who the rail-splitters who lay aside the axe to enter legislative halls, and are conducted to presidential chairs? They are those who give their souls to their work, while other thousands—oh, how many!—pass away into utter nothingness. The billows of ruin sweep over them, and they are lost and forgotten forever.

The question to be decided in becoming a Christian is, Shall I serve God or the world? Shall I live for time or eternity? Shall I prefer to suffer affliction with the people of God, or enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season? It is the decision of this question which agitates and often rends the soul, as if a demoniac power were shaking it. Until this decision is made the soul is restless. So soon as this question is settled, and the soul has uttered the voice, *I am resolved what to do*, there is comparative peace. The yoke thus taken up becomes easy, the burden thus lifted becomes light.

In whatever work we engage, the entire con-

secession of one's energies soon makes it pleasant. The artist may at first go with reluctance to his studio. The sky is cloudless, the fields are dressed in their richest verdure, and pleasure beacons him to the grove or the lake. But when, month after month, he has applied all the energies of his soul to his work, and creations of beauty rise upon the canvas beneath his pencil—the spreading landscape, the placid lake, the misty mountain—then his studio becomes his elysium, his toil becomes his delight. He finds a pleasure here far greater than he could find strolling through grove and meadow with rod or gun.

So it is with all honorable employment. The student at first finds it necessary to take up a cross, and to turn a deaf ear to the seductions of pleasure. But soon he loves, above all things else, the silence of his study and communion with his books. The farmer, by devotion to his business, soon acquires a taste for his ennobling employment. In his fields, with meadow, and upland, and wood-lot, he finds a happy home, which he leaves with reluctance, and to which he returns with joy.

It is thus peculiarly with the religious life. It becomes more and more pleasant every day. Upon this pilgrimage one is often, as it were,

ascending a mountain, where the prospect, hour after hour, becomes more expanded and glorious. It is like beholding the dawn, which grows brighter and brighter, till hill and vale, lake and forest, are bathed in a blaze of effulgence. There is in religion that which is divine. It is the soul's native air, its paradise, its celestial home. Every sorrow it soothes, every pain it assuages, every disappointment it alleviates. It invests the furrowed brow and gray hairs with the crown of a coming glory. Old age, with all its infirmities, is rendered by it better, nobler, happier than youth. Death presents himself to the Christian with smiles of welcome. He comes to robe the conqueror for presentation at Heaven's courts. His advent is attended by a celestial retinue to escort the victor to his home in the skies. Is this death?

“No, no! It is not dying
To go unto our God;
This gloomy earth forsaking,
Our journey homeward taking,
Along the starry road.”

Sinning, sorrowing, world-weary ones, here is rest, which God offers you without money and without price. It is a common remark in worldly matters that the *best* article is the

cheapest. In nothing is this more true than in religion. You can, perhaps, turn the sod with a poor plow, mow with a cheap scythe, and drive puny and skeleton oxen; but you can not afford to take up with a second-rate religion. You need the very best which can be obtained on earth. If you have adopted a poor, unreliable faith, against which your conscience is ever protesting, with no sacraments, no fervent prayer, no zealous consecration to God, cast the miserable delusion away, and embrace "pure religion and undefiled." In your career through immortality, it is not safe to trust yourself to any guide but to the wisest and the best. I can afford to eat coarse bread, and to wear a threadbare coat, and to live in a humble home, but I *must have* the best religion. If any one can show me a better than the one presented in these pages, I will abandon this, and embrace that as the true gospel. That is the best religion which makes the best men, which 'enkindles in the heart the purest love for God and for mankind. And there can be none better than the Gospel of Christ. It is pure gold, the priceless pearl. The tree is known by its fruit. Look at Christianity.

It requires the abandonment of *every thing that is wrong*, and the doing of *every thing that*

is right. It presents us with that sacrifice of our Savior, in virtue of which God can be just, and yet justify the penitent sinner. And it offers us, in all our weakness, the aid of the Holy Spirit, to enable us to come off conquerors in every spiritual conflict. We can not conceive of any thing soaring above its requirements. God is your father, to be loved with your whole heart. Man is your brother, to be loved as yourself. Life is to be devoted to the glory of God by doing good to your brother man; and every favor you confer upon your brother man, God regards as conferred upon himself.

Solemn looks, long prayers, loud professions, are the very worst weapons the Christian soldier can wield. They do but make him repulsive, impede his action, incapacitate him for success. A genial, joyous spirit, frankness, magnanimity, disinterestedness, the highest-toned honor, these are the weapons he must ever keep bright.

Stratagem may be successful in worldly warfare. It was a maxim worthy of paganism, *An virtus an dolos quis ab hoste requirat*—that is, it is equally allowable to conquer your enemy by courage or by cunning; but in the Christian conflict intrigue and trickery are invariably disastrous. Be frank, open, honest as the day.

Scorn all manœuvring. Never do that which you are afraid will be found out. That which can not be done ingenuously is not worth doing at all. There never was a shrewd manœuvrer who did not eventually manœuvre himself out of all confidence and influence. Be as transparent in your conduct as the light. Thus shall you escape many a pang and many a humiliation.

Let your progress be steadily onward, firm, and unwavering. Washington was as warm a patriot in the evening of a defeat as in the morning of a victory. His love of country did not ebb and flow with the surges of the battle. His bosom glowed with as much patriotic ardor when retreating through the Jerseys, and when shivering in the huts of Valley Forge, as when he stood exultant on the heights of Dorchester, or when he received the sword of Cornwallis on the plains of Yorktown.

There is a kind of backsliding religion which is detestable and a sham; up to-day, down to-morrow; now hot, now cold. It is as if the sun should lift its head above the horizon in its glorious dawning, and then should slip back a few degrees, leaving the world in blackness. Again it ascends, rises bright and clear; mountains and valleys are bathed in splendor, trees

wave in the golden light, and the songs of birds fill the air, when suddenly there is another slip, and the gloom of midnight ensues. Thus, by a series of uprisings and backslidings, it struggles painfully toward the zenith. Such piety is worth but little. "The path of the just is like the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

There is much nobility in the character which true Christianity forms. John Newton was an abandoned sailor, who had deserted his ship, and was living in sin and misery among the natives on the shores of Africa. His pious mother had long been dead; but the remembrance of her soft hand upon his head when a child, and her fervent prayers in his behalf, brought him, like another prodigal, to himself. He plead for mercy, trusted in the Savior, abandoned his sins, and returned to England a broken-hearted penitent, but a rejoicing Christian. He entered the ministry, devoted his life to the service of Christ, and became one of the most earnest laborers in the Lord's vineyard the world has ever known. He was instrumental in the conversion of large numbers, and died at a good old age, venerable in virtues, and rich in the love of the whole community. He it was who wrote that beautiful hymn,

“One there is, above all others,
Well deserves the name of Friend.”

William Wirt was attorney general of the United States. He was one of the most accomplished scholars, profound reasoners, and eloquent orators our country has produced. His amiable disposition, his unobtrusive and polished manners, his refined taste, and his high intellectual attainments, secured for him the esteem and almost the homage of the community; but he was living without love for God, without penitence for sin, without trust in Christ, without care for the souls of his fellow-men.

While thus living, he heard a poor blind preacher, James Waddell, tell the story of a Savior's love. His heart was touched. He wept over his neglect of God. He prayed, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.” He commenced a new life of prayer, of penitence, and of Christian duty. He became the warm friend and eloquent advocate of missions, and of every effort of Christian benevolence, and, in the high circles in which he moved, gave his commanding influence openly and entirely for Christ; and in the hour of death, hope and joy beamed from his eye, brilliant with almost celestial vision, as he exclaimed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

William Wilberforce was a young man of distinguished birth, princely fortune, and brilliant genius. His rank in life, his unrivaled wit, his skill in debate, and his fascinating eloquence, all conspired to make him one of the most conspicuous members of the British House of Commons, and his society was courted by the most aristocratic circles of aristocratic England.

As he was traveling, with fashionable and pleasure-seeking companions, on the Continent of Europe, in a leisure hour he chanced to open Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*. His attention was arrested, and, as he read, his eyes were opened and his heart touched. As there was thus revealed to him his own lost condition, his alienation from God, his need of a change of heart, he was overwhelmed with anguish, and plead for mercy.

He soon found peace, and, with the boldness of Paul, confessing his Savior before men, commenced immediately an active, prayerful, self-denying Christian life; and then, in the exercise of moral courage which has perhaps never been surpassed, William Wilberforce moved, in the very highest circles of rank and intellect this world has ever known, a humble, consistent disciple of Jesus Christ, never ashamed of

that Savior who had redeemed him by his blood.

He wrote an earnest appeal in behalf of the religion of the Gospel, and published it at his own expense, and presented a handsomely-bound copy to every member of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. He devoted the resources of his brilliant mind, the influence of his exalted station, and the income of his large fortune to the interests of humanity. England, nay, Christendom, mourned when Wilberforce died; and as the organ in Westminster Abbey uttered its requiem over his burial, gathering thousands dropped a tear in reverence of his memory. He is now, we doubt not, in heaven. Archangels are his companions and friends; but the influence of his life and labor still lives on earth.

Reader, will you become a Christian? All other questions are trivial compared with this. The effulgence of a bright day will soon be upon us. Its morning has dawned. A traveler awakes at midnight in the vale of Chamouni. All is dark and dismal as the shadow of death. He sleeps an hour and wakes again. What means that slender line of light, far off in the west, gleaming like a star? It is the summit of Mount Blanc, which has caught the

first rays of the rising sun, while the glowing orb is yet far below the horizon. Majestically the illumination descends the mountain. Pinnacles, cliffs, glaciers, are gilded with glory. He gazes upon the phenomenon with awe and rapture. And now the whole valley is flooded with light. Another day is born.

England and America are the loftiest peaks of the moral world. They have caught the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and are illumined with the tremulous light. Soon shall the lower vales of Europe, and the dark gorges of Asia, Africa, and the Islands of the Sea, be penetrated, and the Sun of Righteousness shall flood the earth with its rays. "The day is far spent; the night is at hand."

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN?

The glad Tidings.—The doomed Man pardoned.—Louis XVI. and Malesherbes.—Evidence that One is a Christian.—How is a Change of Heart effected?—God's Love.—How it operates.—The Ship-carpenter.—The Battle of Life.—The domestic Waterloo.—Constitutional Temperaments.—Religion as a Source and Cause of Happiness.—Its beneficent Influence.

GLORIOUS is the mission of a minister of Jesus Christ. He is the bearer of glad tidings—to the sinner, redemption; to the mourner, solace; to the dying, victory. If he were commissioned to carry to the condemned the doom of death, then might he well clothe himself in sackcloth and shroud the church in mourning. Birds should hush their songs, and flowers wilt, and winds wail their requiems as, with pallid cheek and sobbing voice, the dreadful message should be communicated.

But it is not so. The herald of the Cross bears glad tidings of great joy. With beaming face and throbbing heart he may penetrate deepest dungeons, shouting "Pardon, pardon

for all who will accept." Well may our churches be decorated with flowers, and every face be radiant with joy, as the glad tidings of the Gospel are proclaimed. The Christian minister is sent "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them which are bound." He is fraught with the same message which the seraph proclaimed to the shepherds of Bethlehem, as angels in retinue woke the echoes of the skies, singing exultingly,

"Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth, good-will among men." It is indeed a sad duty to be the bearer of evil tidings. Louis XVI., in the tower of the Temple, was doomed to die. Malesherbes was to acquaint him with his doom. Woe-stricken, haggard, with disheveled hair, the illustrious friend of the monarch tottered up the steps of the prison, and, falling at the feet of the king, his tongue seemed palsied with anguish, and he could only groan, and weep, and bathe the hand of the monarch with tears. It is thus, with crushed heart, that we bear the messages of death.

But oh! how different when we are commissioned with tidings of life and joy. A distinguished French general was doomed to die. In a dungeon of the Conciergerie he awaited the

dawn, when he was to be led to the guillotine. He had been guilty of treason, and was justly condemned. His daughter, a child of seventeen, forced her way to the presence of the emperor at St. Cloud, and, in agony, threw herself at his feet, crying,

“Pardon, pardon, sire, for my poor father!”

A scene of supplication, tears, and anguish ensued which no pen can describe. At length the emperor said,

“Well, yes, my child, for your sake I will pardon your father, trusting that for your sake he will not again plot rebellion.”

And now, enraptured, she is the messenger of glad tidings. Accompanied by congratulating friends, she enters a carriage, and the horses are urged to their utmost speed. Her heart is bursting with the impatience of bliss as she hurries to the dungeon door. The rusty hinges turn, and she throws herself into the pinioned arms of her father, exclaiming,

“Pardon, pardon, pardon, dear father! You are pardoned and free!”

And then she swoons away upon the bosom of her father in an excess of rapture too overpowering for a human soul to endure.

It is true that there are those who will not accept this pardon and return to God; prodi-

gals who cleave to their wanderings, and persistently renounce paternal love.

“But shall the children of a king
Go mourning all their days”

because there are those who will not be the children of that king, and who reject his proffered love? No. God is the father and friend of all who will accept him as a father. None will perish but those who *will not* come unto him that they may have life.

It is a very difficult thing to induce a man to resist any one of the ten thousand temptations which are ever pressing upon him. Many men are called moral simply because God has placed them in circumstances in which it is not easy for them to commit those particular sins which society condemns. But to lead a man to resolve,

“I will, God helping me, do *every thing* I think to be right, and I will do *nothing* which I think to be wrong”—

To lead a man to this resolve surpasses all the unaided power of the human intellect. Nothing but the Spirit of God can influence to this effectual decision. If you doubt it, reader, go and try the experiment upon some of your neighbors. You will soon confess, with one of the most eloquent of the French preachers, that

you "find old Adam too strong for young Melancthon." Can you honestly say that you have formed this resolution, and that you are trying earnestly, prayerfully, thus to live? And surely you will require no argument to prove that you ought to do all that *is right*, and that you ought to refuse to do any thing that *is wrong*?

When you hear a man say, "I always calculate to do about what is right"—*about what is right*, you have, according to my experience, in nine cases out of ten, met with a hopeless reprobate. When a man says frankly, "I know that I am living shamefully, and I despise myself for it," then, though he may be a very wicked man, there is at least some honesty in him, and some hope for him. But when one can declare, with tearful eye and fervid spirit, "O Lord, thou dost know that it is my daily desire, and endeavor, and prayer that I may do *all* that is pleasing to thee, and avoid *all* that is displeasing to thee," then may he feel indeed that he has entered the "straight gate." This is the frame of mind to which the soul is brought by the Spirit of God in conversion.

Therefore it would not seem difficult for any man to decide the question, with a good degree of certainty, "Am I a Christian?" We can

surely, with some considerable accuracy, ascertain what is our ruling desire, and what is the main object of our endeavors. The question is not, Are you actually doing every thing that is right, and nothing that is wrong; but is it the honest *purpose* of your heart, and the daily *endeavor* of your life, and the unceasing object of your *prayers*, that you may thus live? Then you are a Christian. This includes all. Then you shall "know of the doctrine," for you are "doing God's will." Then shall you have penitence, and saving faith, and spiritual illumination, and you shall go on your way rejoicing. If you have only the "willing mind," God will lead you in at the celestial gate.

If you have not this spirit you are not a Christian, no matter what else you may be. If you have not this spirit you can not go to heaven, and without it you ought not to be admitted there. If we can judge at all of the Divine administration from any principles which are recognized among men, it would be weakness in God to admit a man to heaven who is in rebellion against the spirit of heaven. God would be thus untrue to his own character, and unfaithful to the avowed principles of his own government. Ought God to introduce to angel companionship men who do

not even *wish to do* as he desires that they should—men who will not even *try* to bring their conduct into conformity to his will? Such men have made this world miserable enough. It is to be hoped that they will not have the opportunity of trying the experiment over again in heaven.

Thus simple are the requirements of religion. Thus are its fundamental doctrines in accordance with the plainest teachings of common sense. Conversion is simply returning in penitence from rebellion to God, endeavoring in *every thing* to live in accordance with his will. And you can not find any honest man who will say that a man *ought to be* admitted to heaven if he *will not* serve God. A finite mind can not measure the enormity of sin to know the doom it merits. But this we do know, that those who are suffering eternal punishment are those who eternally will refuse to love and serve their Maker. There are no penitents in the world of woe, with contrite hearts pleading the merits of Christ, and striving to lead the lost ones around them to love and obey God. Hell is but the abode of defiance and blasphemy.

But how is this change from sin to penitence and amendment effected in the mind? Matter

is moved by material force. You drive the spike by sledge-hammer blows. Mind is swayed by motive. You win love by kindness. You lure to duty by rewards. You dissuade from wrong by penalty. Hence the Gospel comes, not with physical compulsion, impossible to be used upon mind, but with entreaty and warning.

Become God's loving child, and he will adopt you as his son and heir. His Spirit will so blend with your endeavors as to secure for you a new heart, pure, noble, angelic. It is thus that you "work out your own salvation, because God worketh within you both to will and to do." He will give you a new body, which shall never again be sick, or tire, or feel decay. He will introduce you to a new world, where there shall be no calamity, storm, or night. He will give you a new mansion, which celestial architects have planned and reared, and which neither pain, nor grief, nor death can enter. He will give you new companions, who shall love you with perfect love, and who shall consecrate all the energies of their ennobled natures to minister to your delight. He will give you a robe, a harp, and a crown, such as angels wear, and wing you for an endless flight, with eternity for your lifetime, and infin-

ity to explore. These are some of the motives which God presents to lure to duty.

But the law of God has its penalty as well as its reward, else it would not be law, but advice only. Continue in rebellion, and your soul must sink lower and lower in sin until it becomes fiend-like. Your body, called from the grave by the resurrection trump, "shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt." Your future world shall be that prepared for "the angels which kept not their first estate," where the worm gnaws, and the fire burns; where there is weeping and wailing, and the blackness of darkness forever. Your abode shall be the prison where the devil and his angels are reserved in chains. Your companions shall be lost spirits who fell from heaven, and all the abandoned of earth. The duration of your existence shall be eternity, for the soul can not die. The prison of despair shall confine you. The walls of that prison you can never scale. The gulf which surrounds those walls is so broad, so deep, that no pinion of fiend or angel can pass it. Such is the penalty of God's law, awful beyond the conceptions of a finite mind, but one which, perhaps, God even can not avert, man being free. This penalty *may be* as inevitable a necessity of sin as that fire should burn or

water drown. If God has made man *free*, hereafter as well as here (and it appears from Scripture that God has done this), and if a man *will not* obey God, how can God admit him to heaven? That he must be excluded is not a conclusion drawn from theological subtleties alone, but from what Locke calls "plain, round-about common sense."

It is a great mistake to suppose that God's love beams only from heaven, and that his wrath blazes fiercely from hell. The state prison which a vigorous government rears is not a monument of the ferocity and mercilessness of that government, but, on the contrary, it is a monument of its beneficence, wisdom, and love. And still that government must sternly condemn those guilty men who are doomed to expiate their crimes in the convict's cell. *It does not merely pity them; it calls them criminals, who merit the punishment they receive.* The whole broad state can not exhibit a more impressive memorial of the paternal care of the government for the protection and happiness of its citizens than is to be seen in the granite walls, and gloomy dungeons, and grated windows, where the disturbers of the public peace are restrained from farther violence.

And thus it is, perhaps, that in the future

world the love of God will not beam more brightly in the illumination which flashes from the palaces of heaven upon golden crowns, and empurpled robes, and the swift pinions of celestial choirs, than will that love, that paternal protecting love, shine from those adamantine battlements, and those dungeons of gloom, where the devil and his followers are held secure forever.

But perhaps the reader asks, How am I to acquire and maintain this spirit of obedience and love?

1. Ask for it. The very asking sincerely is having.

2. Give time to meditation. Think what it is to be an angel, what to be a fiend; and remember that you must be the one or the other eternally.

3. Nip wrong in the bud. "*Obsta principus*"—*oppose the beginnings of evil*—was even a pagan maxim. Commence your defenses in the heart. Do not allow yourself even to think of wrong—no, not for one instant. You are never safe if you allow yourself to parley with a wicked thought.

4. Let your outward conduct be what it should be if your heart were right. Sometimes we are compelled to work from the out-

ward man to the inward man, from the body to the soul.

When the ship-carpenter would make the oaken timber, with its heart as of steel, pliant, so that it shall bend like a wand, he places it in the steam-chest and lights his fires, and the infinitesimal particles of the steam pierce the fibrous wood till the heart of the oak is reached, and bends, like a willow twig, at the will of its conqueror.

Thus a smile upon the cheek will often force its way to the saddened heart, and make that smile. A kind word from the lips, even when the soul of the speaker is irritated, will often penetrate the deepest recesses of that soul, and awaken kindly emotions there. A friendly deed, exercised toward one whom it is hard to forgive, will often warm and bless the heart itself, enkindling there the spirit of forgiveness. Let benevolence, then, smile upon your cheek, and kind words be spoken from your lips, and deeds of beneficence proceed from your hands. Thus shall smile, and voice, and action be but as angel co-operators to lift your soul to celestial dignity, to the loveliness and the magnanimity of God's son and heir; they shall be but the plumage of the pinions on which you shall soar to your heavenly home.

Such is the spirit of Christ. God is your father, every man your brother. All caste is broken down. All tribes, tongues, races, are merged in the universal fraternity. Man is God's child, no matter where cradled and nurtured. No matter whether he come from the bleak realms of Norway, or from the vine-clad Rhine, or from sunny Italy, or from barbaric Asia, or from benighted Africa, or from swarming Ireland, or from the boundless prairies where the Red Man hunts his game—everywhere man is the brother of his fellow-man, made of one blood, to be purified, elevated, ennobled by fraternal love and unwearied aid.

Life is with every one a battle-field, and the Christian conflict is ever arduous. President Kirkland, of Harvard College, once remarked satirically of a wealthy clergyman, that he was clothed in purple and fine linen, fared sumptuously every day, and preached eloquent sermons upon self-denial. It is easy for a man of genius to write glowingly of conflicts and sacrifices of which he knows nothing in his own personal experience.

There are many Christians, in vigorous health and in prosperity, who know but little of the trials of faith and patience to which others are exposed. Look at this mother of a large fam-

ily, with small means and feeble health. The sick child in the cradle is crying. The household work, all unaided, is to be done. There is food to be cooked; there are clothes to be washed, garments to be mended, beds to be made, rooms to be cleaned, and a group of children to be watched over and trained. The husband, perhaps, cold and thoughtless, never gives his wife a sympathizing word. A sick babe keeps her awake at night, and, pale and emaciate, she is scarcely able to drag her limbs along through the toils of the day. Her nervous system is entirely shattered. She has no recreation, no change. It is the same weary round day and night, month after month, year after year. It is seldom even that she can get to the house of God, to have her spirit refreshed by a glimpse of the rest provided for her when her journey shall end.

Why God leads so many of his children through such trials we know not; but beautiful indeed is the aspect of religion when we see one passing through such valleys of humiliation with a calm and placid spirit. There are many such. Christianity has no heroines superior to these. Martyrdom has no flames more trying to faith than these. There are probably no crowns in heaven brighter than those pre-

pared for victors in such wearing, wasting, interminable conflicts. When faith is thus triumphant, and passion is subdued, and the whole spirit is brought into subjection to God's law, we have the highest victory Christianity can give.

The great battles of earth are fought at Marathon, Austerlitz, and at Waterloo. The battles of the Cross, to win a celestial crown, are fought in the crowded shop, amid the harassments of traffic, and at the kitchen fire, where children cry, and duties press, and nerves ache, and the spirit sinks almost crushed beneath its load. The faith which triumphs here is surely celestial. Care-worn mother, you who are so weary and so heavy laden, be of good courage. Your trials are great, your conflicts severe. Angel eyes watch the issues of the battle. If you come off a victor, great will be the conquest and the reward; and you *can* do all things through Christ strengthening you.

Every man seems to be created with certain innate traits of character, which Christianity controls, but does not essentially change. These traits are often developed in the cradle, and continue to the grave. The ardent, impassioned man carries a glow into every thing. He strikes with the hammer, swings the scythe, embraces political views differently from the

man of less excitable nature. He has both the virtues and the faults of the impulsive man. His feelings are easily aroused, and perhaps quickly subside. Like Cassius, he carries anger

“As a flint bears fire,
Which, being much enforced, doth show a hasty spark,
And straight is cold again.”

Such men are of great value in the Church. They are easily elated and roused to exertions; but, on the other hand, they have correlative faults, being easily disheartened. In the hour of triumph they are standard-bearers; in the day of defeat they are of but little avail.

The greatest of all earthly commanders intrusted the fiery Murat to lead the charge when his columns were striding on to victory; but in the awful hour of retreat, when the exhausted battalions were staggering over the frozen plains, the imperturbable Ney was assigned to the command of the rear-guard.

It is not easy to decide who are the most useful men, the ardent or the cool and reflective. Both are needed. The reflective must guide in council, and the impetuous go forward in action. This diversity of natural temperament pervades the whole of our religious experience. We have our favorite hymns, our favorite passages of Scripture, our favorite religious truths.

One clergyman places upon his study table a vase of flowers, that fragrance and beauty may be ever before him. Another seeks cloistered glooms. A dimly-burning taper reveals a skull-bone and a coffin by his side.

Jeremiah wails funereal songs, and his Lamentations sweep the heartstrings of all the children of sorrow: "Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears!" Isaiah, exultant, peals the trumpet tones of victory: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come."

Christianity is revealed to man in wonderful adaptation to this diversity of natural temperament. To one, God is revealed prominently as the universal loving Father; to another, as the compassionate dying Savior; to another, as the guiding and consoling Spirit. The mind, through its constitutional temperament, grasps the one or the other of these revealings.

One man, naturally proud and unyielding, whose heart has long refused submission to God, and who has at length been thoroughly subdued, and has submitted with the spirit of a little child, finds *submission* to be the religious truth which governs his mind.

Another man becomes convinced of his utterly lost and helpless condition. He feels his entire inability to extricate himself from sin,

and, in despair, casts himself upon the mercy of God and finds pardon. Helplessness, moral *inability*, becomes his ruling idea. He desires this truth to be prominent in every prayer and in every sermon.

But here is a man who has heard *inability* preached all his life. Soothing himself with the delusion that he can do nothing, he has been long "waiting God's time." At length he is roused by a sermon upon *human responsibility*. He is called upon to "work out his own salvation." Roused by this new view of truth, he prays, he reads his Bible, he attends prayer-meetings, he strives with all his energies of penitence and supplication to enter the strait gate. Soon he is cheered by the assurance that he has truly commenced his pilgrimage to the celestial city. In *his* view *human responsibility* becomes the great truth which must unceasingly be urged upon the sinner's heart.

Another man, hardened in sin, has been startled by the thunders of eternal retribution. The terrible vision of hell, its dungeons, chains, and penal fires, appall his mind. To every other appeal he had been insensible, until the groans of the damned affrighted him, and he fled from the wrath to come. *Hell* becomes

the nucleus of *his* theology. Hell is with him the sword of the Spirit, the great power of God for the conversion of the world.

Another, of more mild and affectionate temperament, has been won by the view of heaven, so vividly pictured in God's word. Its green pastures and still waters; its pure and loving companionship; its mansions, and robes, and harps, and crowns; its angel bands, circling around the throne of a tender father—all have melted the heart and flooded the eye, and have led to the entire consecration of heart and life to the Savior.

He who has the spirit of Christ is Christ's disciple, no matter through what instrumentality he may have been led to the abandonment of sin. Many a true Christian groped his way to heaven through the cloistered glooms of the Middle Ages. The Church can show no brighter ornaments than Fénelon, and Paschal, and Thomas à Kempis, though in days of darkness they counted their beads, and performed painful penances, and responded to liturgies hoary with the encumbering accumulations of benighted centuries. When feudal armies scourged the world, and rapine and violence filled all lands, in many a battlemented castle, and in many a convent cell, there were found

disciples of Jesus, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, who wept, and prayed, and died, and ascended to their reward. It is, indeed, cheering to see the spirit of piety triumphing over mental darkness and over intellectual errors.

Unless your religion makes your home happy, and your neighbors happy, and your own heart happy, it is a miserable delusion. There may be *other* sources of sorrow, but religion is only an instrument of joy. That religion which contents itself with saying, "Lord! Lord!" and yet does not God's will; which allows the tongue to distill the venom of slander, and the soul to indulge itself in petulance; which drives hard bargains; which crushes the poor, rivets shackles upon the oppressed, speaks no solace to the sorrowing, and lifts no burdens from tottering shoulders—however uncompromising and zealous it may be, it is not even a counterfeit of Christianity; it is Christianity's most formidable antagonist, most malignant foe.

The religion of Christ is pure, honest, just, lovely, and of good report. It is a religion which returns smiles for frowns, blessings for curses, good for evil. It is a religion which enjoins kindly affections, and which requires not only that "when ye be buffeted for *your faults*,

ye shall take it patiently," but that "when ye *do well* and suffer for it," ye shall take that patiently also. Christianity rises over a sorrow-stricken world like the morning sun, which dispels darkness and gloom, drives wild beasts to their lairs, and opens the flowers, and inspires birds' songs, and causes the trees to clap their hands for joy.

The true Christian makes Christ his pattern; tries every day to look as Christ would look, kindly, affectionately, sympathetically; to speak as Christ would speak when annoyances tempt, when unjust reproaches provoke; to think as Christ would think, spreading over the faults of others the mantle of Christian charity. How much more kind is God than man! Man is so ready to be blind to the beam, and eagle-eyed to the mote; so ready to throw the stone at another, perhaps not half so guilty as himself; so prone to assail his brother with the taunt, acted, if not spoken, "*I am holier than thou.*"

When all Christians shall manifest the spirit of Christ, ever loving, forgiving, aiding, making charitable allowances—all trying to make life's burdens lighter, even for the evil and the unthankful, then, indeed, will the desert blossom as the rose. It is this spirit which is the real development of Christianity, its aim and

its end. The Christian should say nothing which may not be repeated; do nothing which may not be known. Whenever he can carry a message which will make neighbors love each other, he should do it. Whenever he can carry a message which will wound feelings, promote alienation, stir up strife, he should sooner gnaw out his own tongue than be guilty of the pestilent crime.

The promotion of happiness and the alleviation of the sorrows of this sorrowing world should be one of the primal objects of the Christian every day. And he should remember that happiness is not mainly promoted by now and then a great sacrifice, but by the little courtesies of life, the trivial kindnesses which are scattered through every hour. Life is cheered by smiles, and kind words, and friendly greetings, and polite attentions. *Words*, how tremendous their power! They strike heavier than cannon balls, and pierce deeper than sabre thrusts. "Be ye courteous," says an inspired apostle. Is this legal preaching? Nay, it is preaching Christ. Unless ye have the spirit of Christ, ye are none of his. In no other way than this can you manifest the spirit of Christ, of Him whose marked characteristic it was that he went about doing good.

CHAPTER V.

THE ADAPTATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE
WANTS OF THE WORLD.

The Forms and Spirit which Religion assumes.—Comprehensiveness of the Christian Scheme.—The Grandeur of Christianity.—The two Efforts for the Overthrow of Christianity.—Persecution.—Corruption.—The Papacy.—The Duchess at Versailles.—Socrates; his Religion; his Pupils.—Humboldt.—The Christian Sailor-boy.—True Nobility.

It is the practical aspect of Christianity which constitutes its great glory. It is the power which it possesses of transforming the selfish heart into the spirit of celestial benevolence, of creating wicked men anew in Christ Jesus—it is this power which makes Christianity so peculiarly the needed religion for the whole world, which gives it its supremacy over all human philosophy and all false religions. But wicked men will resort to almost any refuge to escape from this practical godliness; and even good men, partially sanctified, are ever eager to find some substitute for this ren-

ovation of heart and life, this becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Hence we have the religion of Formalism, with gorgeous cathedrals, and pealing organs, and censers, and robes, and genuflections, and holy days, all to compensate for the want of holy lives.

Hence we have the religion of Dogmas, stern orthodoxy, dead creeds; a faith inflexible, granitic, and craggy, upon which no flower blooms, no fruit ripens; a Sodomie apple, a sepulchre garnished.

Hence we have the religion of Emotion, transient and spasmodic, with heat and cold, revivings and backslidings; all a-glow to-day, all ice to-morrow; now praying like an angel, with swimming eye and choked utterance, and now, with the unrepentant prodigal, eating the husks of swine.

Hence we have the religion of Pharisaism—the “Lord, I thank thee,” spirit, the proud reliance upon mere integrity in traffic, the groveling boast, “I am as good as my neighbors;” with no broken heart, no tear of contrition, no faith in an atoning Savior, no hungerings and thirstings for righteousness.

Hence we have the religion of Reform, planting great batteries to bombard slavery, intem-

perance, and all the demon vices which enslave humanity; fighting them with their own weapons, with clamor and wrath; throwing away the sword of the Spirit which Christ has placed in our hands with which to achieve all his victories, and seizing instead the gory club of carnal warfare; striving to cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils.

In contrast with all this, how beautiful is the religion of Christ! How divinely is it adapted for our lost world! Its cardinal *doctrine* is, God is our common father, and all we are brethren. Its cardinal *duty* is to love God with our whole heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. Its cardinal *solace* is that, guilty as we are, Christ has died for us, and that, if we will now return to the Christ-like life, our sins shall all be forgiven. Its cardinal *encouragement* is that, frail and weak as we are, the Holy Spirit will hear our prayers, and guide and strengthen us, so that we shall come off as conquerors, and more than conquerors, in every conflict.

Here we have the religion we need—exactly that which we need, and all that we need; the religion for our own hearts, for our homes, for our country, and for the whole world. It is the religion for the week-day as well as for the Sabbath-day; the religion to guide the

farmer in his field, the seaman on the quarter-deck, the citizen at the polls, the statesman in the cabinet. It is the religion for the young man in his hours of terrific temptation, and for the old man groping through the shadows of death. It is a religion which embraces every duty of life, there being nothing so grand as to be beyond its reach, nothing so minute as to elude its scrutiny.

This brutal inebriate, belching oaths, reeling through the streets in rags and dirt, is your brother—one for whom Christ died. His woe-stricken wife is your sister; his beggared children are your younger brethren. You must do for them what you can, by your sympathy, your influence, your vote, your direct aid.

What you can—alas! that it should be so little. It is easier to expel Satan in any other form he assumes than when he thus takes possession of body and soul. But the religion of Christ demands that no form of earthly woe should elude your sympathy, or should dissuade you from the attempt to do every thing you can to change that degradation and woe into purity and happiness.

These toiling slaves, doomed by their brothers of a whiter skin to life-long ignorance and unpaid servitude, with no hope of culture, shut

out from all literature, all science, all elevation, even the Bible banished from their cheerless hovels—these defrauded men and women, enduring the greatest wrongs which man can suffer from his fellow-man, are your brethren and sisters. You should feel for them as if “bound with them.” Their elevation in the scale of intelligence, and comfort, and happiness must be an object of your efforts and your prayers. You must do for them what you can by the utterance of right sentiments on all proper occasions, by whatever of political influence God has intrusted to you—*what you can*, no more, no less, to secure their enfranchisement, their culture, their introduction to all the high privileges and dignities of manhood.

And thus, through the whole round of humanity, wherever, in this land or in any other land, there is a grief you can assuage, you must do it. Wherever you can send a gleam of joy into a darkened heart, no matter on what continent or island, or in what dungeon of the globe, the religion of Christ requires that you should do it. The “charity” *love* of the Christian should be like the sunlight, which not only bathes in floods of joy the nearest worlds, but which irradiates with light and heat the remotest planets which circle through the abysses of space.

Oh! there is grandeur in Christianity. There is divine dignity and nobleness in Christianity. How exalted the resolve, "My voice, God helping me, shall always be for the right. My heart, God helping me, shall always throb for the poor and the oppressed. My influence, God helping me, shall be ever exerted to the utmost for the elevation of all my brethren of the human race to purity, to dignity, and to heaven."

The soul finds peace so soon as this resolve is enthroned as its guide. All trials, sacrifices, persecutions, encountered in the execution of this resolve, become crowns of glory, and passports to higher exaltation in celestial courts. Does your devotion to this Christ-given principle alienate cherished friends, break up established business, eject from office, blight political prospects, curtail income, expose to reproach and shame?—these shall all be like the honorable wounds which attest the heroism of the warrior; they shall be ensigns armorial on your Christian escutcheon—badges of promotion in the peerage of heaven.

Such is Christianity. It is not the religion of heartless, dead dogmas, spasmodic experiences, pharisaic pride. It is penitence for sin, trust in the Savior, and the firm, glowing, per-

severing adoption of the spirit of Christ. All the grand doctrines the Bible reveals, Atonement, Regeneration, Sanctification, Adoption, Resurrection, and Final Judgment, are only so many motives pressed upon our souls by our heavenly Father to aid us in the great conflict against sin, and to urge us onward in the career of a blessed immortality.

Drops make streamlets, thence brooks, thence rivers, thence the ocean, which heaves navies upon its bosom, and shakes continents with its billows. Your voice, reader, and your heart, are perhaps essential parts of those influences which shall redeem the world. Let that heart, then, ever beat true to humanity, and that voice ever speak for God and his truth.

There have been two great efforts made in this world for the overthrow of Christianity. The first was to assail it directly by all the energies of persecution. For ages the flames of martyrdom blazed fiercely, and blood flowed in torrents. But this effort signally failed.

Resort was then had to corruption. Christianity was perverted in all its teachings, and, instead of being presented as the friend of the captive, the advocate of the poor, the protector of the oppressed, a false Christianity was fabricated by priestly cunning, robed in imperial

purple, crowned with the tiara, and swaying the sceptre of merciless slavery. This effort was more successful.

Kings and dukes rallied around this debauched Christianity, shouting its praises, and maintaining it with their armies. This wretched counterfeit of the religion of Jesus was sustained by proud, licentious courts, and, in its turn, sustained them in all their aristocratic oppression of the poor, wielding against the crushed and the helpless all the energies of the most terrible superstition. Thus, under the veil of a coronation, was Christ crucified.

The masses were doomed to ignorance by this execrable cheat which called itself Christianity. The chains of feudal slavery were riveted anew by this false religion. All the terrors of inquisitorial torture, and all the energies of divine retribution, were invoked by mercenary priests against any one who should attempt to break his chains, or against any sympathizing heart which should dare to plead the cause of the poor against the rich, of the weak against the strong.

Thus lingering ages passed away, during which a *false Christianity* was the impregnable bulwark reared by haughty insolence and domineering pride against human progress; and

though during the Dark Ages there were many individuals in the cabins of poverty, and some few even in regal palaces, who walked humbly with God, the *Church* as an organization of the state, Papal Christianity as moulded and wielded by kings and courts, became the great overshadowing oppressor of the nations, darkening Europe with its gloom.

But Christianity sweeps all this spirit of oppression into a resurrectionless grave. Planting itself upon the great principle of man's *brotherhood*, it demands of every man that he shall love his neighbor as himself, and that he shall do to others as he would that others should do to him; and this principle is to guide him in reference to all of the human family. In his view, there is to be neither Jew nor Samaritan, rich nor poor, bond nor free. His neighbor, of whatever condition, is his brother, whether he be red as a ruby, yellow as gold, tawny as bronze, black as ebony, or white as the drifted snow.

The denomination to which a Christian shall belong is, of course, a question very unessential. As a matter of fact, this question is generally settled by accidental or social considerations. We fall naturally into those divisions of the Church militant where we find ourselves

by birth and parental relations, or we unite with those friends who are of congenial sympathies and tastes. In every denomination you can find those who are a disgrace to the cause of Christ. There was a Judas even among the apostles. In every Christian denomination you find those who are burning and shining lights in the world, who live the life of the righteous, and die the death of the righteous, and go home to glory. "In every nation, he that feareth God and doeth righteousness is accepted of him."

In a church-yard in Germany there is a grave-stone bearing this inscription: "Look not mournfully upon the past; it cometh not back again. Wisely improve the present; it is thine. Go forth and meet the shadowy future without fear and with a manly heart."

This is true Christian philosophy; and it is by the sweep of these genial and all-comprehensive principles that Christianity is alike adapted to every conceivable condition of humanity. We are informed that upon a gala-day in the palace of Versailles, in the midst of one of the most imposing scenes of courtly pageantry this earth has ever witnessed, the maiden daughter of a duke entered, sweeping the polished floor with her silken train, and radiant

with almost unearthly beauty. One of the spectators exclaimed, "Ma foi, quelle destinée, jeune, riche, joli, et une duchesse!"—*my faith, what a destiny, young, rich, beautiful, and a duchess!*"

No one will deny that even in these hours of youth, and opulence, and admiration, the consciousness that God was her friend, and that with her the journey of life would terminate by entrance at the golden gates, would add immeasurably to her joy. A few years, however, only passed away when revolutions came. Father and mother perished on the guillotine, property was confiscated, and the child of opulence and rank, in friendlessness and poverty, was driven into exile. The bloom of youth vanished as, in a foreign land, want and woe traced their haggard lineaments upon that once beautiful cheek and brow. Lingering years of grief conducted her to a dying bed upon a pallet of straw. Where is there for her now any solace but in Christianity?

And how ample to all the wants of her heart in this dread hour are the teachings of the Gospel! "Christ has died for you, life-weary, woe-stricken sister. The Spirit is ready to renew and sanctify your heart. Trust in Jesus, and heaven's gates shall be opened to

you, and you shall enter in and sigh no more forever."

Eagerly she embraces the Gospel. Joy, to which she has so long been a stranger, beams from her dying eye. A smile plays around her pallid cheek. "Lord Jesus," she says, "receive my spirit;" and she is gone.

"I see an angel mounting high
Amid the glories of the sky;
On gorgeous wing
Of cherubim
She sweeps the heavenly plains.
Celestial pearls her brow impress,
Robes of ethereal dye invest
Her fairy form,
Which sweeps along
Where joy forever reigns."

No matter what our condition in life, there is never an hour in which religion would not make us more happy than we otherwise should be, and to us all hours are coming in which nothing but religion can save us from irretrievable anguish; and the simplicity of the requirements of religion are such that no man need be perplexed respecting the principle of duty. We find Christians in the very darkest and most corrupt ages of the Church; and even in ages and realms which Christianity has not penetrated we do here and there find individ-

uals who, groping their way only by the light of nature, seem to "fear God and do righteousness," and thus, as God assures us, are accepted of him.

Let us retrace the march of history to periods anterior to the advent of Christ. We enter Greece, the land of genius, eloquence; and song, as yet unvisited by any ray of revealed light. There we meet, in the Acropolis, beneath the dome of the Pantheon, or teaching in the groves of Academus, Socrates, a devout man, hungering and thirsting for more knowledge of God. He has never heard of the promised Messiah. His soul yearns for the light of immortality, and for some guide to lead his steps to the eternal throne.

And yet Socrates every day walks with God, feeling after him, and breathing fervent prayers for his presence and his blessing. The graphic pen of Grecian history reveals him to us surrounded by a group of the young men of Athens, who are listening eagerly to his teachings. Taking the highest standard of right which God has presented to his mind—the law of conscience, to which Paul declares that those unenlightened by revelation are alone amenable—he urges the passion-tossed, temptation-tried young men around him to live

true to their noblest instincts, and to strive to soar to companionship with God.

"When I hear Socrates," writes Alcibiades, one of his pupils, "I am charmed and fettered. My inmost soul is stung by his words, and I am indignant at my own rude and ignoble character. I weep tears of bitterness to think how vain and unworthy is the life I lead. Nor am I the only one that weeps like a child. Many are affected in the same way."

Oh, Socrates, thou art called a pagan. Are there not many living in the blaze of Christian light who will stand rebuked by thee at God's bar? How many thousands are there in Europe and America, upon whose minds is poured the full flood of Gospel truth, who "have only a God to swear by, but no God to pray to?" As, in the day of judgment, they shall pass away with the wailing throng, may they not see Socrates, radiant with joy, winged for heaven, as the Judge shall say,

"Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

More than two thousand years ago this great and good man taught, amid the temples and the shrines of idolatrous Greece, the highest

principles of morals and natural theology his mind could attain. He declared himself to be commissioned, by an inward movement and call from God, to rebuke sin, and to plead with his fellow-men to practice virtue, and to seek divine knowledge through all the avenues the mind could explore. In the account which Xenophon, himself a pagan, gives of this illustrious man, he says:

“To the good providence of God Socrates referred all human blessings. He maintained that the Deity knows every thought; and that it is the sacred duty of men to worship him with all their powers, and to strive in all things to do his will.”

The definition of piety which Socrates gives is beautiful and all-comprehensive. We know not where, outside of revelation, to find a definition more perfect.

“Piety,” says Socrates, “is the endeavor to make one’s self and all others as perfect as possible.”

Reader, you who have heard of a Savior’s love, you who walk in the full blaze of Christianity’s meridian day, you who have heard of the resurrection, and final judgment, and eternal retribution, have you this piety? Is this the standard of your life? Can you look up to God’s throne and say,

“O Lord, thou dost know that it is my desire, my prayer, my earnest endeavor to make myself and all whom I can influence as perfect as possible?”

If not, how inglorious is your life! how inexcusable is your sin! May it not indeed be “more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you?”

Socrates taught the young men, who ever crowded around him, eagerly receiving his instructions, to offer daily the prayer,

“O God, give us all good, whether we ask it or not. Save us from all evil. Bless our good actions, and reward them with success and happiness.”

In imagination we can see some noble young man, with thoughtful, pensive air, wandering amid the shrines and idol statuary of the Parthenon, regardless of mythological legends, and of all the images of gold and marble which crowd the niches around him, and with clasped hands and moistened eye breathing this prayer to that “unknown God,” whose power and Godhead are only revealed to him through the light of nature. And then there comes to us from the Gospel of Christ a voice, which says,

“God is no respecter of persons; but in

every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him."

May not the Christian hope to meet in heaven some of the disciples of this devout teacher, whose hearts were all ready to receive Christ so soon as he should be revealed to them? The spirit breathed in these instructions and this prayer is, indeed, the very spirit of Christianity. It is truly the essence of Christianity that every man should live according to the highest law of truth and duty revealed to him. But you who read this book have a wiser than Socrates to illumine your mind, and to teach you to pray. Contemplate the prayer which our Lord has taught his disciples, the most sublime and comprehensive utterance to be found in earthly language:

"Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Have you imbibed the spirit of this prayer? Does it ascend daily from your lips? Are you living in the light of these petitions? It is moral worth which makes the man in the sight of God; and all men, however situated, may

attain that worth. In fact, it is more frequently attained in the school of deprivation, hardship, and suffering than under any other teaching.

A Humboldt may be crossing the ocean. He contemplates the majestic waste of waters with the eye of a philosopher, sounds its depths, measures its expanse, and analyzes its constituent elements. Night comes. He looks upon the stars. Every constellation is familiar to him. He knows their names, their relative positions, and can trace the path of the sun with unerring precision through the majestic abysses of space. He descends to his state-room, and, with diagram and algebraic formula, records the observations of the day—a record which perhaps elicits the admiration of the whole philosophic world. All this he *may do* with about as little moral elevation of soul, as little moral sensibility, as is possessed by the steam-engine which drives the majestic ship over the waves.

But far up among the shrouds, clinging to the cordage, there is a sailor-boy, dressed in the coarse garb of toil, of humble parentage, of limited education. The philosopher hardly regards him as a brother of the human family. The boy has just finished the work for which he

has climbed the spars. Grasping the shrouds, he looks up to the gorgeous canopy above him, glittering with the mansions of God. There he sees his Father's home. There he sees the abode of angels. The instructions he has received from his mother's lips rush upon his soul. His whole moral nature is moved. His eyes are dim with tears, and his voice is choked with emotion, as he repeats the hymn taught him in the Sabbath-school:

“Ye stars are but the shining dust
Of our divine abode,
The pavements of those heavenly courts
Where I shall see my God.”

Who is the greater, the nobler, in the sight of angels, the philosopher with his diagrams, or the boy with his God?

A black cloud appears in the west. Flashes of lightning illumine the ocean. Crashing thunder causes the ship to tremble in every timber; and the gigantic billows sweep by as if goaded to madness by the demon of the storm. The philosopher, the *mere* philosopher, hastens on deck to witness the phenomenon. With electrometer in hand, he experiments upon the electric fluid; he notices the flash and listens to the thunder, and carefully computes the speed with which the waves are driven. In all this

he sees but the forces of nature—electric fluid, aerial vibrations, atmospheric energies; blind, blind nature alone converses with his blinded soul. Again the benighted philosopher records his observations, and again, godless, falls asleep.

The Christian sailor-boy stands on the deck through the storm in his midnight watch. He knows nothing of the scientific speculations which alone engross the soul of the philosopher. But God walks with him as he paces the deck—God, his father, his companion, his friend—God, who loves him, and has adopted him as his own child. In the roaring thunder, in the gleaming lightning, in the heaving, foaming, tumultuous ocean, he sees, and hears, and feels the presence and the power of God. Though he may not have Byronic or Miltonic skill to give utterance to his emotions, still those emotions, the most enriching and ennobling, may none the less pervade his soul. As he looks out upon the storm and exclaims,

“On cherubim and seraphim
Full royally he rode,
And on the wings of mighty winds
Came flying all abroad,”

he feels that God is with him, and he is purified, inspired, and ennobled by his presence. Now which of these two is the greater? Which

is endowed with the loftiest spirit? Upon which soul descends, radiant from above, in fullest measure, the love of celestial choirs—upon the cold, heartless, prayerless, godless philosopher, whose whole moral nature has been starved and shriveled, as he has fed only upon the husks of science, or upon the warm-hearted, full-souled, God-loving sailor-boy, all unlettered as he is, who in “God lives, and moves, and has his being?”

It is thus that all that is ennobling in the teachings of Christianity may come home even to the unlettered mind. We would by no means speak disparagingly of the highest attainments of science; but it does not require acquaintance with Greek and Roman classics for one to feel God’s presence in the grandeur of the midnight storm. One may not be able to understand all the revelations found in *Cosmos*, or to comprehend the demonstrations of *La Place*, and yet he may read, and comprehend with intensest appreciation, the inscriptions God has registered on billowy ocean, earth, and spangled sky. He may interpret, with vastly more than philosophical acumen, all the voices of nature, when God speaks in the thunder, or breathes his anthems in the storm-swept forest or the resounding surge.

Earthly science alone can decipher the hieroglyphics which Assyrian or Egyptian has carved on obelisk or mausoleum; but there is a nobler science, heaven-born, God-taught, which enables the Christian, even unlettered though he be, to decipher those more sublime characters which the finger of God has every where carved, on craggy mountain and verdant valley, on prairie and forest; every where, every where—on ocean, earth, and sky. The loving heart ever dwells in companionship and communion with God.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ENNOBLING INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

The Christian Nobleman.—Great Diversities of human Condition.—Companionship with God.—The two Farmers.—Burns's Cotter's Saturday Night.—The Elevation which Consciousness of Possession gives.—Uncle Tom.—The Inheritance of the Christian.—Visions at Death.—Janeway.—The Martyr Stephen.—The true Spirit of Religion.—Importance of Doctrines; of Forms.—The Guilt of corrupting Christianity.

It was remarked by an accurate and philosophical observer of mankind that humanity had perhaps attained its highest development in the person and character of the intellectual, polished, Christian English nobleman. We can easily see, in the advantages which such a man may have enjoyed, the potent influences which have given him his elevation. Born in an ancestral castle, where every thing is beautiful and tasteful around him; where the highest art ministers to his wants; where, from infancy, he never hears a rude word, or witnesses an action which the highest refinement has not

gilded, he almost necessarily acquires the bearing of a polished gentleman, with that indescribable charm of high breeding which sometimes, indeed, seems instinctive in the lowly born, but which is generally the result of long training and careful culture.

Blessed with pious parentage, and witnessing, from his infancy, the exhibition of religion in its most attractive form—God being ever recognized in the household in morning and evening prayer, and in every event of life, joyous or afflictive—his appetites and passions are early checked and brought under Christian restraint, so that they do not acquire unnatural vigor; and when, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, he becomes an humble disciple of Jesus Christ, he has but little to unlearn.

In mental culture he is alike favored. The wealth of a dukedom supplies him with tutors of the highest attainments in every branch of human learning. The tour of Europe is before him, and he passes through cathedrals of the most imposing architecture, through galleries of art, and over fields of renown, with scholars of the highest genius accompanying him, to unfold to his mind, with these imposing illustrations, all the treasures of history, and science, and art. Thus enriched with all mental

and moral culture, he takes his seat, by right of birth, in the Parliament of Great Britain, and aids in wielding a sceptre whose power reaches to the utmost limits of our globe.

Under such influences men have been *sometimes* trained to such a character of refinement, intelligence, and piety as to make them patterns of humanity. Though such cases are very, *very* uncommon, still there have been such cases; and when you find such a man, you meet with that rare combination of excellencies, physical, intellectual, and moral, which excites universal admiration.

It is a mystery, never in this world to be explained, why God has allowed so much diversity in the privileges of his children. That there is a very great difference can not be denied. But perhaps some reader says, It is only tantalizing to remind me of these privileges of the rich and the great, which I never have enjoyed and never can enjoy. The cradle of my infancy was not rocked in a ducal chateau. The imperfect education I possess has been attained through toil and discouragements. The business of my life exposes me constantly to the society of those who are hostile to religion. I am compelled to hear oaths, and to witness vice in every loathsome form; and it is only by a

continued struggle against bad habits which I have formed, and against infirmities of my nature, in which I have long indulged, until they have become too strong almost even for divine grace to conquer, that I can make any progress in holiness.

But, in reply, it may be remarked that, great as the diversity of privilege in this world undeniably is, it is not so great as is sometimes imagined. True elevation of soul—that which wins God's regard—may exist independently of graceful movements in the drawing-room. Moral nobility consists not in an acquaintance with the technicalities of science, with the nomenclature of chemistry, with familiarity with the classification of plants and shells.

Lord Byron dwelt in a beautiful villa upon the heights near Genoa. The windows of his chateau overlooked the blue Mediterranean, and opened before him gorgeous vistas of the snow-capped Alps. He was endowed with most exalted genius, and was in the possession of youth, health, wealth, and world-wide renown; but his soul was degraded, guilty, and miserable. Nature had no aspect of beauty and no song of melody which could cheer his spirit. If you look through smoked glass, the loveliest landscape is draped in mourning, but

the prism throws all the hues of the rainbow upon wilds dreary and desolate. Thus the joyful soul can spread beauty over every expanse, while a guilty and wretched spirit will shroud a June morning and an Eden landscape in a sepulchral pall.

The man who lives in companionship with God is buoyed up, as on angel pinions, above fogs and clouds, into the region of serene and eternal sunshine. As in a balloon, he looks down upon this globe, this ant-hill, with its busy runnings to and fro, and up, up, to the interminable expanse, where there are thrones, mansions, celestial powers. The soul expands with lofty, ennobling thought, and with its expansion swells the brain; and there beams forth, often even here below, from sparkling eye and cheek, and expressive lip, the lineaments of one who is *God's son*, a prince of celestial blood, the heir to an immortal crown, here, in masquerade, journeying for a season *incognito* ere he ascends to his inheritance.

Two farmers toil side by side. The one has no God. He is merely of the earth, earthy, with no inspiring motive but to fill his bin and feed his cattle. Night comes, perhaps sublime with storms, wrecking earth and sky. He sits listless by his fire; the kitten purs upon the

rug; and he, as soulless, as prayerless, as godless, dozes in his chair. The hour for retirement comes. Like the horse at the manger, and the ox in the stall, he lies down to sleep without the slightest recognition of a heavenly Father. This man, created but little lower than the angels, has thus fallen to a spiritual level with the cattle he feeds.

Look at his neighbor. He also has toiled all the day long, his eyes on the earth, his soul in heaven. As by the sweat of his brow he has been earning his daily bread, he has been cheered by visions of glory to come. Perchance he read in his morning prayer,

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

As in the close of a dark autumnal day, of clouds and floods, and crashing thunder, the sun breaks through the vaporous gloom, and, piercing the fissures, gilds forest, and meadow, and mountain with a strange glory, the harbinger of a bright to-morrow, so does the Christian catch glimpses, now brilliant, now faint, day by day, of ethereal bliss. His soul, by these visions, is elevated, ennobled. He has something glorious to live for. His soul is lifted up, and

he mounts, as upon eagle's wings, to his Father's home, where he is to return after life's journeyings, to go no more out forever.

How beautiful the description Burns gives of the Christian "Cotter's Saturday Night!"

"The cheerful supper done, with serious face
They round the fireside form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er with patriarchal grace
The big hall-Bible, once his father's pride;
His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He reads a portion with judicious care;
And, *Let us worship God*, he says, with solemn air.

Then kneeling down to heaven's eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear,
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere."

Thus does piety stamp nobility upon the soul of man, and place the impress of his own grandeur upon every employment and every condition. Thus may religion, with its majestic revelations and its sublimities of hope, raise the plow-boy above the undevout philosopher. His thoughts wander through eternity, and cir-

cle around the throne of God. In every star in the sky he sees a mansion which he hopes yet to visit. Thus does God give to his sons and daughters, though in humble walks of life, intellectual joys and expansion of thought which others know not of.

There is many an unspoken poem sung in the soul of the Christian which neither Byron nor Shelley could comprehend. There is many a celestial tune played by the fingers of God on the harp-strings of the regenerated spirit, which vibrate sweetly on angels' ears and wake the melodies of heaven.

All men have noticed that elevation of character which the consciousness of possession tends to give. Poverty is proverbially depressing. The man who is sliding down into the vale of want and dependence can not cherish that elation of spirits which *he* feels who is borne upward and onward by the crested billows of prosperity.

The American slave, toiling from the cradle to the grave simply as a laborer, with no possessions—with absolutely nothing which he can call his own—develops a very different character from that of the New England farmer, who, from his door-sill, can look upon broad acres, and say "They are mine!" There is eleva-

tion of character, conscious dignity, promoted by the sense of ownership. This spirit, unregulated by instinctive propriety or the teachings of religion, may develop a proud and haughty bearing, a disposition to assume consequential airs, and to look down upon the more lowly. But this perversion of the principle shows its strength and its tendency.

One of the most attractive creations of moral loveliness which literature has produced is unquestionably the character of "Uncle Tom," in his lowly cabin. There are millions of hearts, in the highest circles of wealth and intellect, throbbing with admiration of that noble specimen of Christ-like manhood. Uncle Tom is, in the heart of the world, a real character, as much so as Abraham or Daniel. He ceases to be an imaginary being because he becomes an incarnation of the soul's highest grandeur, a moral grandeur from which the soul can look loftily down upon all material deprivations and sufferings.

Now contemplate the value of a Christian hope as a *possession*. Suppose the adversary had said to this poor slave, "Sell me your Christian hope, and I will give you in exchange your freedom." "No!" would Uncle Tom say; "though earthly freedom is the greatest of

earthly blessings, my Christian hope makes me a freeman in Christ forever. Think you I would barter *eternal* freedom for that which terminates at death, and death may come in an hour?"

The adversary takes him to the thronged city, shows him a block of marble stores, and says, "The rent of these will secure you a clear income of twenty-five thousand dollars a year. I will give you the title-deed to them all, in addition to your freedom, in exchange for your treasure in heaven."

"No," exclaims the penniless slave, "I would not exchange my heavenly inheritance for all the buildings in all the cities on this globe. All this wealth would soon be only available to purchase for me a gilded coffin and an ambitious tomb."

The adversary makes one more attempt. He takes the Christian slave to the gorgeous castle which the wealth and the labor of ages have reared. There it stands, a majestic pile, in all its baronial splendor, with turret, and battlement, and tower; with its gorgeous saloons, gilded ceilings, galleries of art, and banqueting halls, where hundreds of guests may move in freedom. The massive fabric rises from the midst of a velvet lawn, approached through

avenues of ancient oaks; boats float upon the silver lake; the wide-spread park is stocked with deer; graveled paths wind through the most enchanting scenery nature and art combined can create. The stables are filled with horses and carriages; and in government funds enough is invested to maintain, regardless of expense, all this splendor.

"All this," says the adversary, "shall be yours, in exchange for your hopes of heaven."

The poor slave turns with contempt from the ignoble offer. "What," he exclaims, "is ducal castle or regal palace compared with the mansion God has reared for me, his child, in the skies? What are the lawns, and parks, and silver lakes of earth compared with the green pastures and still waters of my heavenly home? The treasures which I feel assured are laid up for me in heaven, I would not barter for all the power, and wealth, and rank earth has ever known."

Such are the possessions of the Christian. Such is the property in reserve for the sons and daughters of God. There is no danger of forming too high an estimate of its value and its splendor. Imagination is not powerful enough to grasp the view. The Christian is God's child—God's heir. Creation, limitless

creation, is his father's house, and he, God's son, is to inherit all.

This thought, even feebly embraced, must ennoble, and it does ennoble. Such is the influence of religion—an influence tending to elevate the man to the angel, the finite to the infinite, the human to the divine.

No one can have been often at the dying bed without at times witnessing a remarkable phenomenon, as if a vision of heaven were opening upon the eye of the dying even before the spirit has left the body. Not unfrequently, just before the soul takes its departure, it seems to catch a glimpse of the world into which it is about to enter. There is a look of amazement, there are expressions of surprise, and a declaration that the scene opening to the eye of the spirit is such as no mortal tongue can describe. Innumerable illustrations of this fact might be introduced. The devoted John Janeway, as he was breathing his last, said to the friends who stood around his bed,

“Oh that I could let you know what I now feel! oh that I could show you what I see! Oh, the glory, the unspeakable glory which I behold! My heart is full. The arms of my blessed Savior are open to embrace me. The

angels stand ready to carry my soul into his bosom. Oh, did you but see what I see, you would all cry out, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!'"

The philosophic Dr. Burgess, commenting upon this subject, says,

"We must not be bold in speaking of what none but the dying can have seen and felt; but certainly there is enough to persuade us that many of those who, with clear minds and organs unoppressed, approach the shadowy barriers between the two worlds, do breathe some airs from that which is beyond; have a solemn, joyous experience, till then, in that degree, quite unknown; and perceive, as if within a curtain, the motions of forms whose outlines and features they can not discern."

It was such a vision which led the martyr Stephen to exclaim, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God!"

How glorious such a termination of the conflict of life! All cares, and toils, and griefs are ended. The sights of earth are vanishing from the eye; the sounds of earth are fading from the ear; but the eye and the ear of the soul are opened to unimagined glories. The songs of seraphim flood the air. The splendors of

heaven are unveiled, as celestial forms crowd the skies on purpled wings. The mansions which Almighty skill has reared rise sublimely upon the view. The paradise which God's hand tills waves its foliage, blushes with its fruits and flowers, and breathes its perfume. Heaven's meadows, and lakes, and hills expand before the enlarging vision, thronged with the resplendent peerage of God's courts. Death does thus indeed lose its terror, and becomes the herald of victory and of life.

The ennobling power of religion is seen in its transforming wicked men to be meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Every human heart requires a great change from its natural condition to prepare it for introduction to such companionship and such scenes. In the vast majority of the human family we can see, even with our imperfect vision, the necessity for this change. Some meet with it at so early a period of childhood that they seem to be sanctified from their birth.

But it is this change from sin to holiness, from regardlessness of God to the earnest desire to become every thing that is pleasing in his sight—it is this change which the interests of humanity implore with an incessant cry, and which Christianity alone secures. It is sin

which curses our world with woes unnumbered. It is holiness alone which can cause the wilderness to bud, and the desert to blossom as the rose.

Doctrines, correct doctrines, are important, but only important so far as they promote this life of holiness. Faith is as valueless as a counterfeit bill if it be not redeemable in the solid gold of *good works*—of a life hid with Christ in God; or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say that faith, Christian faith, like love, is that inspirer of the soul from which proceedeth every thing that is good. If this purpose be not accomplished, there is no faith. "Faith without works is dead," and "works" without "faith" are an impossibility. You can not love God unless you *believe* there is a God. You can not repent of sin unless you *believe* that sin is hateful. You can not trust in Jesus unless you *believe* that he is your atoning Savior. You can not pray, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me," unless you *believe* that it is necessary to be "born again of the Holy Spirit."

Ceremonial rites are important in Church organizations, in forms of worship, as aids to devotion, but only important so far as they make men good men—loving God, their father,

loving man, their brother. Forms are but the scaffolding used temporarily in constructing the temple; essential as means for the attainment of important ends, but valueless in themselves.

Baptisms and sacraments are important, infinitely important; divinely appointed to impress the soul with the value of eternal things, and to rouse it to holy zeal; but if baptisms and sacraments become dead forms, they are of no more avail than the Indian's war-dance, or the genuflections of the idolater before his feathered god.

The object of Christianity is to make men good men, angelic in character, possessing the spirit of Jesus Christ, that God's will may be done in earth as in heaven. Then will wars cease, and all despotisms melt away into love. Oppression will no longer trample upon its victims. Fraud will be heard of no more. All nations shall then sing one song; all flags shall then blend in friendly interminglings, and every hand shall present the open palm of charity, and shall close only in the warm grasp of fraternal greetings.

There can be no peace in this world until all men meet this change. So soon as the spirit of Christ reigns in all hearts, our sorrows will

cease. There can be no infidelity worse than that which makes Christianity the cloak of oppressive actions; which sanctimoniously says, "Lord, Lord," and yet obeys not God's will. It was this hypocrisy which led our Savior to utter that most terrible of all his denunciations,

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves."

There can be no crime more dreadful, no guilt of a more crimson dye, than to pervert the teachings of Christianity to the upholding of oppression, and to the strengthening of the influences of extortion and violence. There can be no perversion of God's will more criminal, no reproach upon the character of our heavenly Father more unpardonable, than to represent the religion he has given to mankind to consist in creeds, and rituals, and formal observances, and not in "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God."

Christianity is the religion for the world—for all times, all nations, all tongues—for humanity, the great brotherhood of man. How expansive and comprehensive this scheme!

Look at it through the most powerful telescopes of faith, and it presents a constellation of ineffable glories. Examine it with the most penetrating microscopes of intellectual acumen, and it is still transcendently beautiful. It is a religion to *live by*. Conscience approves it. Reason sanctions it. Faith sustains it. It is a religion to *die by*. No man can doubt, in a dying hour, that his best preparation for that hour is the consciousness that, penitent for sin and trusting in the Savior, he has done what he could to promote the purity of heart and life of every member of the human family.

This is the sublime simplicity and consummate grandeur of Christianity; the religion for earth and for heaven, for the blooming child and for the hoary head, for the bridal and the funeral, for the morning of smiles and the night of tears; it is the religion for time, with all its vicissitudes, and for eternity, with all its possibilities of change.

“Oh brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother;
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there.
To worship rightly is to love each other;
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

Various and discordant Systems of Religion.—The Inward Witness.—Altamont.—Dr. Payson.—Inefficiency of Argument.—Experimental Testimony.—The Hunger of the Soul.—Legend of Pontius Pilate.—Sublime Revelations of Christianity.—External Evidences unavailable for most Christians.—Nature of the experimental Evidence.—The most convincing Argument.—Hume.—Voltaire.—Byron.—Death-bed of Henry Clay.

It is said that, at the time of the birth of our Savior, there were worshiped, within the limits of the Roman empire, thirty thousand gods. All the nations and tribes then inhabiting the world had their distinct deities and their peculiar forms of religion. These systems were, many of them, sustained by the most dazzling splendor of temples and ceremonies. Learning and refinement contributed all their attractions to embellish these shrines, and poetry has never soared to higher flights or eloquence uttered more impassioned strains than in eulogizing the Roman gods.

Our Savior declared all these systems to be

false, wicked, and fatal. For so doing he was accused of blasphemy, and punished with death. Still the new religion proclaimed by Christ was embraced by thousands. But how could these Christians know, with any certainty, that their faith was not also a delusion? There were around them innumerable forms of religion, advocated by the wise and embraced by the powerful. Christianity takes its place in the midst of them all. How can any one be assured that all these other systems are false and that Christianity only is true?

Or let us travel down the path of eighteen centuries to the present day. All these pagan systems have vanished before the religion of Christ. We, nursed from childhood in the forms of Christianity, take it for granted that our religion is divine. We embrace it, and feel assured that our sins are forgiven, and that we are accepted of God. How can we know that this is not all a delusion?

It is said that there have been miracles performed in attestation of the truth of Christianity; but we have not seen them performed. But, it is said, we have the testimony of eye-witnesses to that effect, testimony which is ample. Admitting this to be true, still, who are there, among the great mass of the community

crowded with the cares and toils of life, who have the leisure or the mental culture which is essential to sift this testimony so as to solve the difficulties and to appreciate the cogency of the historic argument?

There is not one Christian in ten thousand who can prove that the books of the Bible were written at the time or by the persons by whom it is said that they were written, or who can make any satisfactory reply to the cavils of Voltaire or the arguments of Hume. Indeed, there are comparatively few who can fully appreciate the force of Hume's philosophical objection to miracles, or the acute refutation of that objection by Campbell, and Butler, and Chalmers.

How, then, the inquiry remains, can the majority of Christians be assured that Christianity is true? Are they Christians merely because they have been born in a Christian country? Have they no better foundation for their faith than a Turk has for Mohammedanism, or a Hindoo for Buddhism?

The Bible itself answers this question in the assertion that "they who believe on the Son of God have the witness in themselves." As light is adapted to the eye, and sound to the ear, so is Christianity adapted to the soul of man. As

we need no philosophical argument to prove that we can see or that we can hear, no more do we need such argument to prove that Christianity is the great want and the great treasure of the soul.

When some one intimated to the dying Altamont that there was no hell, he replied, "I know that there is a hell, for I feel its flame already consuming me."

Thus may the Christian say, "I know that there is a reality in religion, for I already feel its peace. The burden of sin is rolled from my heart. The inward assurance I have that, through penitence and trust in Jesus, my sins are forgiven, and God has accepted me as his child, is an inestimable reality, more precious than mines of gold. You need not attempt to prove to me that there is no heaven; I already feel at times some of its genial glow. This peace of the soul, this repose of conscience, I do, as a matter of fact, enjoy. I know that I possess it. And, if this be not a reality, what is a reality? I need this repose. I know that I have found it. What more do I want? It is impossible for any sophisms to discredit this witness within myself."

When Dr. Payson was on his dying bed, he wrote, "Oh, my sister, my sister, could you but

know what awaits the Christian—could you only know so much as I know, you could not refrain from rejoicing and even leaping for joy! Labors, trials, troubles, would be nothing. You would rejoice in afflictions, and glory in tribulations, and, like Paul and Silas, sing God's praises in the darkest night and in the deepest dungeons."

Argument has no power to overthrow such soul experiences. Christianity informs us that in the harmonious employment of our powers and passions to promote the happiness of man and the glory of God we shall find tranquillity and joy. The Christian says,

"I have tried it, and it is true. I have the strongest of all possible evidence of the divine power of religion—the evidence of my own heart. For six thousand years the inhabitants of this world have been in vain searching for happiness. They have pursued almost every conceivable object; they have run in almost every path, and have found only disappointment. The Epicureans, renouncing the doctrine of the illustrious founder of their sect, that the greatest good consists in the happiness which springs from virtue, and is to be found in the peace and harmony of the soul with itself, invited to the voluptuous indulgence in

all sensual pleasures. The Stoics, also renouncing the precepts of Zeno, their founder—precepts probably borrowed from the Jewish Scriptures—endeavored to deaden the sense of sorrow by the paralysis of all the nerves of sensibility. Fame, gold, power, lust, all have had their votaries, who have only crowned themselves with thorns, and, in the anguish of disappointment, they have exclaimed, ‘All is vanity and vexation of spirit.’ ”

Christianity professes to inform us where we may find the highest degree of consolation and happiness consistent with our present fallen condition. The Christian says,

“I have obeyed these teachings, and have found the promised peace, and it is a reality which I would not exchange for ten thousand worlds. The philosopher may as well attempt to prove that my ear is not pleased with harmony, that my eye is not refreshed with beauty, that my sense of taste is not gratified by the peach or pear which melts upon my palate, as to prove that my soul is not fed, and sustained, and strengthened by Christianity. The loveliness which entrances my eye, the songs which thrill upon my ear, the fruit so exquisite to my taste, may as well be pronounced delusions as that Christianity which

meets and satisfies the highest wants of my soul; and inasmuch as my soul is nobler than my body, so is the satisfaction of its cravings a more positive reality. Away, then, with cavils and skepticism. I have a witness within myself which puts them all to flight."

The Christian knows that there is a reality in Christianity, because it has produced a real change in his own character. All sin has become the object of his abhorrence; perfect holiness has become the absorbing object of his desire. Once there were particular sins against which he struggled, and others in which he not unwillingly indulged; but now he struggles against every known sin. Christianity is subduing and refining all his powers; promoting within him peace, humility, contentment, devotion; bringing him into sweet reconciliation with himself and with God.

The world has lost its dominion over his heart. He is weaned from its gaudy pleasures. He feels that he is but a stranger, a pilgrim, a mere traveler through those exciting scenes which once engrossed all his interests. He sees others in hot pursuit of posts of honor, but he, in some degree, has overcome the world. The pride of life is vanquished. His home is in heaven; his treasures in heaven;

his heart in heaven. In affliction he has boundless sources of consolation. Reproach he can bear; poverty and pain he can submissively endure. Death has lost its sting, the grave its victory. A new principle is established in his heart, which enables him to triumph over temptations which once led him captive at their will. At times he can say rejoicingly and triumphantly,

“Oh how glorious to be conscious
Of a growing power within,
Stronger than the rallying forces
Of a charged and marshal'd sin!”

That faith which has enabled him thus to overcome the world is its own best witness. This testimony rises above all external proof. It stands at his heart, uttering the accents of peace and quietness when gazing upon the dying struggles of beloved friends, when property takes wings and flies away, when disease prostrates him upon a bed of pain, when revolutions agitate the world. Calmly he says, “My home and my treasures are in heaven; of what shall I be afraid?” This is the inward witnessing of the Spirit, and cavils can not disprove its testimony.

Every thing that has life has hunger, and the more vital the life the more vehement the hun-

ger. The sickly plant asks but little. The lordly lion, gnawed by famine, utters a roar which shakes the hills. That mysterious principle called *life*, which no philosophy has yet been able to penetrate, is never self-sustaining; it is always fed with nutriment from without. A tree or shrub has life, perhaps the lowest form. A brute animal has life, a higher form, demanding more and better food. The soul has life, eternal life, and it demands nourishment in quality and quantity corresponding with the purity and ceaselessness of its cravings.

A tree may be fed with guano and ashes; an animal can be fed with herbs or flesh; but the soul, ethereal in its nature, demands ethereal food. Its cry for nourishment is insatiable. Every one is conscious of that aching void which it is so difficult to find any thing to fill. The hunger of the soul has been the theme of ancient bards; it has been the great problem of all philosophies, the burden of all literatures. "Oh where shall peace be found," is the unceasing cry of humanity.

Not only does the soul, as a whole, demand its appropriate food, but every separate attribute and faculty of the soul, whether intellectual or moral, must be thus fed. Our propen-

sities, our moral sentiments, our intellectual powers, all grow by what they feed upon. Every generous deed strengthens and enlarges the faculty of generosity. Every exercise of forgiveness gives new vigor to the forgiving faculty. Every cherished emotion of kindness makes one's loving nature more capacious and all-embracing.

A man may starve his imagination, his memory, his reasoning powers, so that they shall sicken, and pine away, and die. He may starve every one of the noblest faculties of his soul, until they all shall be dry and withered as autumn leaves. There are men who seem, as to all practical purposes, to have no souls. They have degenerated into mere animals, and have become, apparently, incapable of faith, or penitence, or love. There is nothing left to which you can appeal. Their souls are starved and dead—"dead in trespasses and sins."

God, who feeds the young ravens when they cry, and who supplies the cedars of Lebanon, the herbage of the prairie, and the moss of the mountain with their daily food, has not neglected to make provision for the soul.

In the heart of Switzerland there is a mountain called Mount Pilate, one of the most wild and gloomy eminences on the globe, black with

fathomless gulfs, and gloomy firs, and storm-battered crags, around which the carrion vulture, the most ill-omened of birds, soars and screams. The peasants, who at times tremblingly climb these cliffs and thread these gulfs, have a legend that Pontius Pilate, after surrendering our Savior to his murderers, and washing his hands in unavailing averment that he would have no share in the iniquity which he so wickedly permitted, here, a heaven-scathed vagabond, closed his infamous life.

The legend says that, after years of misery, Pontius Pilate, with the mark of Cain upon his brow, terminated his wretched days by plunging into the icy and ever storm-tossed lake which occupies the summit of the mount. But the vexed spirit of the betrayer of the Savior could find no rest. It continues to haunt the place. A spectral form, it is said, often emerges from the lake, washing its hands in the black waves, and wringing them in agony. The hideous apparition seems to convulse even nature itself. Dense clouds rise over the "infernal lake," wrap pinnacle and crag in gloom, and a hurricane bursts forth, rending the forests and shattering the rocks with unearthly power.

The simple peasants in the vale below gaze upon the phenomenon awe-stricken. Making

the sign of the cross upon their breasts, they fall upon their knees in prayer, and tremble as they contemplate the anger of God in the gleaming lightning and the crashing thunder.

It is easy to see how powerful must be the influence of such a superstition upon the hearts and the lives of the ignorant peasants, who cluster around their firesides, and listen to the roar of the midnight storm, in the midst of which they hear the fancied shrieks of the victim of divine vengeance. There is an important truth mingled with the superstition. That truth is *that sin shall not go unpunished*. And it is by no means improbable that that single truth produces a salutary effect upon their untutored minds, which infinitely counterbalances any injury the superstition may create.

Look, then, at the influence of unmixed good that the revelations of the Bible must exert over any soul which understandingly receives them, over the wisest and most highly instructed, as well as over the simplest and most unlettered. A young man receives the truth that, if he will but live up to the highest standard of right he can find, looking to God in prayer for guidance, carefully cherishing conscience by striving never to do violence to its warnings, he, by thus "doing God's will," shall un-

failingly "know of the doctrine;" that is, he shall be so guided to the truth that he shall not err from the paths of life. There is thus revealed to him, as the result of living in accordance with the precepts of Jesus, in loving God, loving man, and striving against every known sin—there is revealed to him resurrection from the grave, immortal life, angelic purity and elevation, and residence in heaven as God's adopted son and heir forever.

In the endeavor thus to live he has the assurance of his own nature, an assurance as strong as is one's consciousness of his own existence, that he is living rationally, wisely. There is no power of argument which can overthrow this evidence. And the hope of joy to come, joy unutterable and endless, is the strongest motive which the mind can conceive to encourage to fidelity. Superstition never imagined a power comparable to the power of the Gospel as a warning against sin and an allure-ment to holiness.

This witness is experimental. It is founded, not in argument, which may be shaken or destroyed by stronger arguments, but in the deepest feelings of human nature. Its deep foundations are laid in the heart, and can only be destroyed by the destruction of the heart's noblest

affections. I have the testimony of consciousness, says the Christian, that eternal life has commenced within me.

Though this inward witness is thus spiritual and experimental, it is, on that very account, justified by the highest deductions of reason. That religion must certainly be divine which can produce so salutary and happy a change in the inward man. There must be a reality in that power which can produce an effect so real, so permanent, so ennobling, in the sinner's heart. It has called into exercise hatred of sin, love of holiness, peace of conscience, delight in God, solace in affliction, and triumph in death. Reason, in its most rigid judgment, declares that no false religion can have this witness.

This is testimony always present and always available, in circumstances of the sorest temptation and to the most humble Christian. When infidel arguments are presented to the mind, when difficulties are suggested which can not be explained, the believer falls back at once upon this inward witness. I have experienced in my own soul, he says, the efficacy of this religion, and therefore I know its value.

The Christian may have had neither time nor opportunity to become acquainted with the

merits of translations or the antiquity of manuscripts. He can not decide between various readings, and perhaps can not prove the authenticity or authority of a single book in the sacred Canon. He may be almost entirely uninformed upon all the important subjects of Biblical literature and criticism. But what is all this to him? He was sick with the awful disease of sin. He tried the Gospel, and it healed him. He knows that his own case is just like that of others, and that every one who will try this same remedy will experience a similar cure; and that thus sin and its consequent sorrow may be driven from the world—yes, from the universe of God. One may as well attempt to convince a thirsty man that he does not need water, or a hungry man that he does not need bread, as attempt to convince the experimental Christian that there is not a reality in the Gospel of Christ.

This witness every true Christian has. All need it alike. It is the foundation of all living faith. It is needed as much by a Lardner and a Paley as by the most unlearned disciple of the Savior. It is found in every pious heart, and is influential above all other argument.

With the growing Christian it is an ever-growing evidence. It keeps pace with one's

progress in the divine life. The more faithful the Christian becomes in every duty, the more firm and undoubting is his conviction of the truth of Christianity. The young Christian may find his faith disturbed by a slight temptation. But the aged disciple of the Savior, who has been strengthened in hours of trial, supported in sorrow, and made triumphant in many spiritual conflicts, attains such a fullness of assurance that there is a reality in religion, and that he has experienced that reality, that no temptations of the adversary can disturb him. He enters the dying chamber, he lies down upon the bed of death, with such an unquestioning conviction that his soul is saved, and that heaven is his home, that the hour of his departure is the most joyful and triumphant of his whole life.

It was thus that Pascal found that faith which gave him the victory over all doubts. Wearied with the laborious investigation of external evidences, which, though they made Christianity, as a divine revelation, in the highest degree probable, still could not amount to mathematical certainty, he submitted the truths revealed and the duties enjoined to his own inward nature, and found there a prompt response, which he could no more doubt than he

could doubt his own existence. A book so infinitely superior to all others in its adaptation to every want of the soul, to the tempted, the heart-broken, the dying—to universal humanity in all its conflicts and its woes—he was sure could not be less than divine. He could think of no heights of philosophy to which Christianity did not soar, of no depths of sin or misery to which its healing virtues did not descend. And thus Pascal, with a mind as comprehensive and penetrating as perhaps any which has ever tabernacled in flesh, bowed in humble and joyful believing. God's word proved to his spirit what light is to the eye and sound to the ear.

It was a grand thought of John Foster's that the miracles which ushered in Christianity were but the tolling of the great bell of the universe, summoning humanity to listen to the truths Christianity was to proclaim. The bell has long since ceased to toll, and its vibrations have faded from almost every ear. But the truths to which that bell summoned the world to listen are still falling upon human hearts, and awaking within those hearts voices which give indubitable testimony to the divinity of the lessons which are taught.

Hence we see the entire refutation of the

cavil that unlearned Christians can have no foundation for their faith. The majority of Christians never have been, and probably never can be, deeply versed in the literature of the Bible. Thousands of Christians died in the triumphs of faith before one word of the New Testament was written. They received the Gospel only from the lips of its teachers. Other thousands have probably gone to heaven, who, in the early ages of Christianity, when the Gospel and Epistles only existed in rare manuscripts, scattered here and there, never *read* one verse of the written Word of God.

And there are thousands and tens of thousands now, whose faith, like theirs, is founded in the most perfect rationality, who know nothing of the arguments by which books have been rejected or admitted into the sacred Canon; who have never investigated the question whether Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, and who have made no inquiries into the subject of interpolations and various readings. They know that they can see when the sun shines. They know that, when hungry, food satisfies them; and they know also, with the same undoubting certainty, that the religion of Christ is adapted to the wants of their moral nature. No man can undermine this firm

foundation of their faith. To every cavil of the infidel the Christian replies,

“I have experienced the efficacy and the power of religion in my own heart.”

Hence it is that the best evidence which can be presented to others of the truth of Christianity is the power which religion exerts over the hearts and the lives of its professors. Christianity is rarely promoted by argument. As a rule of life, it is a religion of, so to speak, self-evident truths, which, in the main, are embraced through the mind's instinctive perception of the excellency of those truths. Our Savior seldom attempted to prove his propositions. He merely stated them. Read his sermon on the mount. Read his parables. They are merely statements of truth, not theological debates. It is true that in the epistles there are deep arguments, and utterances of profound Christian philosophy; and these arguments silence the cavils of the skeptic, and lead the Christian on to lofty views of the government of God, so that, however powerful the grasp of his mind and acute his intellect, he can find in the Word of God enough to task that mind to its utmost, and sublime revealings of thought, which will bear it, as on an angel's pinion, in its upward flight. But still, all that is essen-

tial to Christianity, all that is requisite to secure the forgiveness and the favor of God, is so simple and self-evident that *unbelief* is declared to be not only inexcusable, but one of the greatest of crimes. "He that believeth not shall be damned."

The need of this Christian faith to meet the wants of the soul is recorded in the biography of almost every thoughtful man. David Hume, the skeptic, as the evening of life was fading away, wrote,

"I seem affrighted and confounded with the solitude in which I am placed. When I look abroad, on every side I see dispute, contradiction, distrust. When I turn my eyes inward, I find nothing but doubts and ignorance. Where am I, or what am I? From what cause do I derive my existence? To what condition shall I return? I am confounded with these questions. I begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition, environed with the deepest darkness on every side."

Voltaire writes in a strain still more impressive and melancholy: "The world abounds with wonders and also with victims. In man is more wretchedness than in all the other animals put together. Man loves life, yet he knows that he must die. He spends his exist-

ence in diffusing the miseries he has suffered, cutting the throats of his fellow-creatures for pay, in cheating and being cheated. The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a crowd of wretches equally criminal, equally unfortunate. I wish I had never been born."

Byron writes, "I have often wished for insanity, for any thing to quell memory, the never-dying worm that feeds on my heart."

John Randolph, of Roanoke, so renowned in the political history of our own country, weary with the storms of life, thus wrote to the Hon. Henry Tucker :

"I would not give up my slender portion of the price paid for our redemption—yes, my brother, *our* redemption, the ransom of sinners, of all who do not hug their chains, and refuse to come out from the house of bondage—I say I would not exchange my little portion in the Son of David for the power and glory of the Parthian or Roman empires, as described by Milton in the temptation of our Lord and Savior—not for all with which the enemy tempted the Savior of man.

"After years spent in humble and contrite entreaty that the tremendous sacrifice on Mount Calvary might not have been made in vain for me, the chiefest of sinners, it pleased God to

‘ speak peace to my heart—that peace of God which passeth all understanding to them that know it not, and even to them that do.

“And although I have now, as then, to reproach myself with time misspent and faculties misemployed—although my condition on more than one occasion resembled that of him who, having one evil spirit cast out, was taken possession of by seven other spirits more wicked than the first, and by the first also—yet I trust that they too, by the power and mercy of God, may be, if they are not, vanquished.

“Had I been a successful political leader, I might never have been a Christian; but it pleased God that my pride should be mortified—that by death and desertion I should lose my friends. I had tried all things but the refuge to Christ, and to that, with parental stripes, I was driven.”

The Hon. Henry Clay, in his dying chamber at Washington, disappointed and world-weary, sought refuge in Christianity. The Rev. Mr. Butler, chaplain of the Senate, in his funeral sermon introduces us to the bedside where the illustrious senator breathed his last.

“From the commencement of his illness,” says Mr. Butler, “he always expressed to me his persuasion that its termination would be

fatal. From that period until his death it was my privilege to hold frequent religious services and conversations with him in his room. He avowed to me his full faith in the great leading doctrines of the Gospel; the fall and sinfulness of man; the divinity of Christ; the reality and necessity of the atonement; the need of being born again of the Spirit, and salvation through faith in a crucified Redeemer.

“His own personal hopes of salvation he ever and distinctly based on the promises and the grace of Christ. Strikingly perceptible on his naturally impetuous and impatient character was the influence of grace, in producing submission and a patient waiting for Christ and for death. On one occasion he spoke to me of the pious example of one very near and dear to him, as that which led him deeply to feel, and earnestly to seek for himself, the reality and blessedness of religion. On another occasion, when he was supposed to be very near his end, I expressed to him the hope that his mind and heart were at peace, and that he was able to rest with cheerful confidence on the promises and in the merits of the Redeemer. He said, with much feeling,

“‘I endeavor to, and trust that I do, repose my salvation upon Christ. I have never doubt-

ed the truth of Christianity, and I now wish to throw myself upon it as a practical and blessed remedy.'

"Very soon after this," says Mr. Butler, "I administered to him the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Being extremely feeble, and desirous of having his mind undiverted, no persons were present but his son and servant. It was a scene long to be remembered. There, in that still chamber, at a week-day noon, the tides of life flowing all around us, three disciples of the Savior—the minister of God, the dying statesman, and his servant, a partaker of the like precious faith—commemorated their Savior's dying love.

"He joined in the blessed sacrament with great feeling and solemnity, now pressing his hands together, and now spreading them forth, as the words of the service expressed the feelings, desires, supplications, confessions, and thanksgivings of his heart. His eyes were dim with grateful tears; his heart was full of peace and love.

"When he felt most the weariness of his protracted sufferings, it sufficed to suggest to him that his heavenly Father doubtless knew that, after a life so long, and stirring, and tempted, such a discipline of chastening and

suffering was needful to make him more meet for the inheritance of the saints, and at once words of meek and patient acquiescence escaped his lips.

“Exhausted nature at length gave way. On the last occasion when I was permitted to offer a brief prayer at his bedside, his last words to me were that he had hope only in Christ, and that the prayer which I had offered for his pardoning love and his sanctifying grace included every thing which the dying need.

“On the evening previous to his departure, sitting for an hour in silence by his side, I could not but realize, when I heard him frequently uttering aloud the simple prayer, ‘Lord, have mercy upon me!’ and the words, ‘Mother, mother, mother!’ how near was the blessed reunion of his weary heart with the loved dead. Gently he breathed his soul away into the spirit world.”

It is the declaration of God’s word that “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” Have you, reader, this inward witnessing of the Spirit? It is a simple, practical test of your condition. If you have it not, what is to sustain you in the days of trial which are to come? Have you reflected upon the scenes which are before you—the an-

guish of death; the corruption of the grave; the doom's-day trump; the burning world; the day of judgment; the assemblage of angels, men, and demons before the great white throne; the welcome to heaven, or the doom to hell—and then eternity? Can you float along upon time's swift current to these scenes with no preparation to meet them?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RESURRECTION.

Revelation confirmed by the Analogies of Nature.—The Chrysalis.—Vegetation.—Views of the Ancients.—The Scene of Resurrection.—Beautiful Conception of Parnell.—The intermediate State.—Changes through which immortal Spirits may pass.—Union of Soul and Body in the future World.—Scriptural Announcement of Judgment.—The final Conflagration.—The new Earth to emerge from the Ruins.—Teachings of Geology, Chemistry, and Astronomy.—Phenomena of the Stars.

ALMOST every doctrine of revelation is confirmed by some remarkable analogy in the system of nature. The insect, after lying entombed for weeks, perhaps for months, in its chrysalis mausoleum, hears some resurrection voice which calls it from its burial. It bursts its cerements, and, expanding its beauteous wings, painted with every rainbow hue, launches into the air, rejoicing in the sunbeams, and sipping nectar from every flower. This emerging of the butterfly from the temporary grave of the worm, as "It flies and swims a flower in liquid air," seems to be the illustration, the scenic ex-

hibition which nature presents of the doctrine of the final resurrection.

Paul attempts to give some faint conception of that spiritual body we are to receive at the resurrection by comparing it with the graceful, fruitful stalk which rises from the burial of the kernel of grain. The dry and shriveled grain is the germ from whence the beautiful blade emerges. Thus does Paul present the whole vegetable world, the uprising of the plant or tree from the buried seed, as illustrative of the resurrection of the body from the grave. The majestic oak, monarch of the fields, whose branches are the harp-strings on which the tempest plays its anthems, is but the resurrection of the buried acorn. The apple-tree, in its June-morning bloom, most gorgeous of earth's bouquets, whose fragrance fills the air, and in the warm bosom of whose blossoms ten thousand bees murmur their joy, is but the resurrection of a dull, dead seed.

Many of the ancients, unenlightened by revelation, had some dim conception of the immortality of the soul. But the idea of the resurrection of the body seems by them never to have been entertained. To the Bible alone we are indebted for the knowledge of this truth. It is not only true that the soul shall live for-

ever, but the archangel's trumpet shall pierce the tomb, and startle the slumbering tenant there. The body, which for ages has been mingling with the dust, shall spring into life at that summons, having undergone some mysterious transformation, preparing it for its flight through empty space, and inspired with vital energies which eternal ages can not wear away.

We are taught in the Scriptures that in the morning of the resurrection *all the dead* shall come forth from their graves.

"The hour is coming," says our Savior, "in which *all* that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."*

This is not merely the announcement of a future existence, but of the resurrection of the *body* from the corruption of the grave.

"In a moment," says Paul, "in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised, and we"—that is, Christians who may be living at that time—"shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."†

* John, v., 28, 29.

† 1 Cor., xv., 52, 53.

In one hour, at one call, the sea shall give up the dead that are in it. The rocky mausoleums of Egypt, the crowded tombs and thickly-sown grave-yards of the city, the battle-fields of the Old World, and the solitudes of the New, when the light of that morning gleams in the horizon, and the thunders of the archangel's trump reverberate around the world, shall instantaneously deliver up their long-held deposits.

Oh, how effectually will that peal arrest all the wheels of nature! All the nations, and tribes, and kindred of the earth will be paralyzed by the summons. Every eye will be riveted, every ear will be on the alert, every heart will throb. Business will stop, pleasure will stop, time will stop. A moment before, the current of earthly affairs rolled on as impetuously as ever. That one sound ushers in eternity. Time and all time's interests are in an instant blotted forever from every mind.

There will be many living at that time. The world will probably then be more populous than at any previous period of its history, and unnumbered millions will be sleeping beneath its bosom. The living will see the archangel as in rapid flight he encircles the world. They will hear the trumpet as it shakes creation, and,

echoing from star to star, reverberates through infinity. They will witness the sublime spectacle of the bursting graves, and the sheeted corpses emerging to the resurrection. Then, by some powerful attraction, the living will be drawn from earth.

“Smooth sliding, without step,”

they pass rapidly through the air, beyond the clouds, and moon, and sun, and twinkling stars, to the place appointed them before the judgment throne.

“Then we,” says Paul, “which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*

But as the buried bodies of the saints shall rise, having undergone some wonderful transformation, preparing them for their flight through infinity and the endurance of eternity, with never-failing youth and vigor, so will the bodies of living Christians be suddenly changed, without the process of death, to embellish the court of God, and to share and to magnify its never-ending bliss. In the poem of the Hermit, Parnell endeavors to describe the imagined change of a mortal to an angel :

* 1 Thess., iv., 17.

“His youthful face grew more serenely sweet.
His robe turn’d white, and flow’d about his feet.
Fair rounds of radiant points invest his hair.
Celestial odors breathe through purpled air,
And wings, whose colors glitter in the day,
Wide at his back their gradual plumes display ;
But silence here the beauteous angel broke,
The voice of music ravish’d as he spoke.”

This poetical conception, beautiful as it is, but feebly delineates the reality of that joyful change to take place in the bodies both of the dead and of the living when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”*

The question is often asked, “What is the condition of the soul during the period which elapses between death and the resurrection of the body to the final judgment?”

1. It is clearly taught in Scripture that the soul, immediately upon death, goes to its appointed place of reward or punishment in the spirit world. There is perhaps no truth more distinctly revealed than this. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, both are represented as going, without any interval of delay,

* 1 Cor., ii., 9.

to their destined abode in the land of spirits. The rich man finds himself immediately in torment, and Lazarus is introduced immediately to Abraham's bosom. The rich man's friends still live, and he begs that some one may be sent back to this world to warn them of their doom.

On the Mount of Transfiguration Moses and Elias appeared visibly to the disciples, proving beyond controversy that their spirits were not slumbering in unconsciousness, but that they were moving actively amid the choirs of heaven, while their bodies were still mouldering in the grave. The declaration of our Savior to the penitent thief upon the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,"* is decisive testimony upon this point. The vision of the martyr Stephen, with heaven unfolded to his eye, and the surrendry of his soul to the Savior, who was waiting to receive his spirit, impressively teaches that the spirit of the Christian passes immediately from the dying scene to the celestial mansions. The desire of the apostle "to depart and to be with Christ"† surely teaches that death would not consign him to long centuries of oblivion, but would immediately introduce him to his heavenly home. He

* Luke, xxiii., 43.

† 1 Phil., i., 23.

prefers to die rather than to live simply because death would translate him to intimate companionship with his Savior.

The Apostle Jude records that

“The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”*

This testimony is certainly conclusive to prove that the souls of the wicked go immediately to the prisons of despair. Enoch and Elijah are revealed to us in the Old Testament as translated to heaven; and it would appear that in their case, as in that of our Savior, their bodies were transformed into the new or spiritual body which others are to receive at the final resurrection.

2. The nature of the soul itself would seem to indicate that it must of necessity, when it leaves the body, continue in active existence. It is the voice of philosophy, as well as of poetry, that

* Jude, 6, 7.

“There is no death ; what seems such is transition :
This life of mortal breath
Is but the suburb of that life elysian,
Whose portals we call death.”

Death merely separates the soul from the body. The soul is a real existence—more a real existence than the body. It is vital in every part, imperishable, invulnerable ; made in God’s image, and it can not die. Where, then, is this soul, if it do not go immediately from the bed of death to its final home ? Look at this withered mummy, in the Museum, which has been dug from one of the tombs of Thebes after a slumber of three thousand years. Is it conceivable that the soul is existing somewhere, embalmed in unconsciousness, amid these resinous folds ?

Contemplate the empty mausoleums of the Pharaohs, which have been swept by the winds of twenty centuries, and where not even a handful of dust can be found in memorial of the multitudes who have there mouldered away. Where are the souls which once inhabited these bodies which have so entirely disappeared ? Is it conceivable that these souls are, for the present, virtually as dead as are the bodies which for ages have been swept in impalpable dust over the desert ; or that

they are imprisoned in these mausoleums of rock; or that they are dissolved, as it were, into spiritual dust, and are wafted over hill and vale at the sport of the winds; or has God some repository for dead souls, where they are preserved lifeless, awaiting the summons of the body to judgment? There is no theory, sustained by a shadow of reason, which can take the place of the clear revelations of Scripture upon this point. When the body, from sickness, age, or accident, falls in death, instantly the soul wings its glad flight, buoyant with bliss, to heaven, or instantly it sinks to the prisons of despair.

Probably in the lapse of ages there may be innumerable changes through which man may pass as he soars upward and onward in the career of immortality. How vast the change from the new-born babe, helpless and almost senseless, with organs all untried, to the strong man, whose pulse leaps through his veins, and whose ambition and energy move perhaps the world.

The first great change which man encounters in passing from this life is the separation of the soul from the body; and thus man exists during the intermediate state—during the period between death and the final resurrec-

tion. The Christian is revealed to us in God's Word as soaring from the bed of death a glorious being without material organization—an angel among angels. For a season the body is laid aside, and the soul exists as a disembodied spirit. There may be countless millions of such in God's wide realms. There may be myriads of worlds, created in unimagined splendor, peculiarly adapted for such an existence.

The soul may thus soar through all the realms of infinity, exploring creation's grandeur, grasping divine philosophy, exulting in celestial companionship, visiting material worlds, assuming celestial forms; an angel glittering amid the hierarchy of heaven, perfect in spiritual organization, and sharing all the glory and bliss of cherubim and seraphim.

It is painful to turn to the contemplation of the lost. Judas goes to his own place, as Paul to his. The soul, divested of the body, can be gnawed by the undying pangs of remorse. The soul, freed from clay, may be consumed by the quenchless flames of despair.

The body and soul, intimate as is their present union, are still so distinct, even here, that the soul can endure pangs of inconceivable severity while the body is free from pain; and, again, while the body is writhing in the hot-

test flames of martyrdom, the soul may be in such an ecstasy of rapture that those very flames shall seem but as a triumphal chariot bearing the conqueror to his coronation in the skies.

Such, the Bible informs us, is the condition of man during the *intermediate state*. The body returns to the dust. The spirit immediately ascends to heaven or sinks to hell. Redeemed Lazarus wings his flight to Abraham's bosom. The impenitent rich man departs to his place in torment.

At length the appointed hour arrives for the second coming of our Savior. "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him."* "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."† Then there is to be the closing up of the drama of time, the final and judicial settlement of the great tragedy and crime of human life. The earth, as now constituted, will come to an end. The universe will be summoned to witness the explanation of life's mystery, and the adjudication of its terrific wrongs.

The scenes of this most sublime event are

* Rev., i., 7.

† 1 Thess., iv., 16.

announced with much minuteness of detail. The archangel shall appear, proclaiming with trumpet peal that time shall be no longer. The overarching skies, which now seem like a blue canopy spread above us, shall apparently be rolled together like a scroll, unfolding to every eye the great white throne, the book of life, and the congregated myriads assembled to witness the scene of judgment. The graves shall burst open, and the bodies of the dead shall rise. The sea shall give up the dead that are in it, and all the dead, both small and great, shall stand before God. Every soul, the redeemed and the unredeemed, is to return and re-enter its former body as it emerges from the grave. This body, which was the companion of the soul's sin or holiness, is also to be its companion in retribution or reward.

And now comes the judgment. These souls and bodies, thus united for the first time since death, now stand before God's bar to hear that verdict from which there can be no appeal. Soul and body were united in yielding to sin, or in struggling against temptation, and it is fitting that they should stand together in the same union at God's bar. All are "caught up together into the air." Guilty souls are summoned from the world of woe, and, reunited

with their bodies, are arraigned, with the devil and his angels, before this tribunal. There the whole mystery of their ungodly lives is to be so unfolded to the universe that, when their doom is proclaimed, the whole universe shall say, *It is just.*

The disciples of the Savior are collected upon the right hand of the throne, their souls united with their resurrection bodies. The smile of the Judge, and the sentence, "Welcome, ye blessed of my Father," cause all the angels of heaven to cluster around them with congratulations. The spirit of heaven already reigns in their hearts, and all the ineffable glories of heaven are spread around them.

In the mean time the flames of the last conflagration have consumed, or rather disintegrated, the world, and from its funeral pyre there *probably* is to be the resurrection of another world, far more glorious than was this when it came fresh from its Maker's hands, and all the morning stars welcomed its birth. It is, I think, now generally supposed that the solid globe, cursed by the fall, will be glorified through redemption. Redeemed man will be elevated to a condition far above that which Adam occupied; and this world, as his abode, from which he can explore infinity, may be re-

newed into a creation of grandeur and beauty which Eden never knew. It is thought that this truth is taught by the following declaration of Peter:

“Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”*

It is by many, and, indeed, I think, now by most students of the Bible, inferred from this passage that this solid globe, having been purified in the flames of the last conflagration, will rise from its ashes expanded, etherealized, beautified with all the majesty and loveliness with which God’s hand can embellish it. Milton, in describing the transgression of Eve, sublimely says:

“So saying, her rash hand, in evil hour,
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck’d—she ate:
Earth felt the wound, and Nature, from her seats,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost.”

* 2 Peter, iii., 11-13.

Dr. Chalmers, in a very eloquent sermon upon this subject, urges, with force of argument which can not well be controverted, that the flames of the last conflagration will but separate the elements of this globe, that they may be recomposed, in forms of unimagined grandeur and beauty, as the regenerated home for regenerated man; not, as now, his prison, but his home; from whence he can soar on angel wings through all the realms of space, visiting the remotest star which glimmers in the new heavens above him, and sharing the festivities of their rejoicing inhabitants.

This world was the scene of man's fall. It has been the theatre of his conflicts and his redemption. It is, perhaps, to be the throne of our Savior's victory over sin, and death, and hell, where the sacramental host of God's elect shall crown him Lord of all. Thus purified from the curse of the fall, it is again to take its place among God's mansions, a blissful home, where angels may love to dwell, and where God himself may linger with delight. Here, among our renovated hills and vales, Eden's flowers shall again bloom, and Eden's fragrant zephyrs shall be wafted; and here lakes and bowers such as Eden never knew shall invite to joy. Here the bells, ringing earth's jubilee,

shall blend with the hallelujahs of triumph of renovated myriads. Here, where Christ endured the cross, he shall wear the crown, his New Jerusalem perhaps embracing Calvary as its central point of glory and of triumph. Christ shall be our sovereign; all the redeemed his willing subjects; and no rebel shall be admitted here to mar the universal joy—to infuse discord into the universal song.

Then the great victory of the Cross will be achieved, and the work of redemption will be finished. Earth, redeemed, will present a paradise more sublime and beautiful than that which Adam trod. The bodies of men, raised from the grave, will present perfection of organization and lineaments of beauty which will make them embellishments to the court of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The soul of man, purified by atoning blood and regenerated by the Spirit's power, angelic in all its capacities, shall take possession of its spiritual body, and enter upon its reign of songs and everlasting joy. Such are the glimpses which revelation gives us of the "new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." It will be a world of hills and vales, of lakes and rivers, of fruits and flowers, of songs and loving companionship. It will be one of the many mansions of our Fa-

ther's house. But infinity is God's abode, and probably in all its mansions his "sons and heirs" will be equally welcome.

The resurrection of the body proves that the redeemed, in the future world, will have a material as well as a spiritual nature. They must, therefore, have a residence suitable to this complexity of being, a residence adapted for a body as well as for the spirit which shall dwell in that body. They must have a home fitted for corporeal frames. To use the language of Dr. Chalmers,

"Not an abode of dimness and mystery, so remote from human experience as to be beyond all comprehension—a lofty aerial region, where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing, but a home from which he may travel, by means unknown to us, to other localities in the universe."

We are not to suppose that this world is to be the *heaven*, the exclusive residence of the redeemed, but that it is to be reconstructed, enlarged, and embellished, as *one* of the brilliant mansions of our Father's house, which house is the infinity which God inhabits. In all portions of this infinity, upon all its glittering worlds, the Christian may be as much at home as is the son and heir of a king—though he

have his appropriate suite of apartments—at home in all the saloons of the palace, in its gardens, its parks, and upon its mirrored waters.

The revelations of science strongly confirm the teachings of God's word. Geology asserts, with authoritative voice, that the interior of our globe, after we break through a thin crust of but forty miles in thickness, consists of a vast mass, eight thousand miles in diameter, of liquid fire. The surges of this molten sea often upheave continents in earthquakes. Vesuvius, Etna, Hecla, and many other volcanic peaks, are but the chimneys through which these flames at times fiercely roar, vomiting forth rivers of lava and clouds of ashes, which darken the sun and overwhelm cities in ruin.

Chemistry informs us that the ocean itself is composed of two gases, hydrogen and oxygen, the one the wick, the other the oil for a conflagration which shall burn rocks and iron as if they were tinder. It needs but a touch from those electric forces which God has stored in his arsenals to cause ocean, and lake, and river to flame to the skies; and then the breaking in of this thin crust of earth into the molten ocean of incandescent fire which surges beneath us would, in a moment, complete the last conflagration.

Astronomy teaches us that such terrific catastrophes have already taken place in other worlds. Fragments of exploded planets flame through our atmosphere. Stars fade away and disappear. In the year 1572 a star suddenly blazed up in such brilliance as to attract all eyes. It surpassed in splendor the most brilliant planets, and the gleam of that beacon-fire, shooting athwart distances which no science can measure, might be seen even at noonday. Gradually the conflagration seemed to abate; the lustrous point grew dim, and finally faded away, the conflagrated world having assumed some form which rendered it no longer visible to mortal eyes.

In the year 1604 another star apparently passed through the same changes. Indeed, we know not how many have been the changes through which this world has passed during the long periods of eternity. It is quite evident that it has been used for other purposes than those which it now subserves ere God called it from chaos, formless and void, and prepared it for the abode of man. We are treading upon the cemeteries of the past. We are dwelling in the mausoleums of those who have gone before us. This globe Satan has cursed. This globe Christ will redeem.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.”*

* 2 Peter, iii., 10-13.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CELESTIAL BODY.

The Soul to occupy a Body in the future World.—Shadowy Conceptions.—Imperfection not essential to Materialism.—The celestial Body not a new Creation, but a Resurrection.—Change in the Bodies of the Living.—Philosophical Objections.—Greatness of the Change at the Resurrection.—Beauty of the human Frame.—Celestial Journeying.—Magnitude of the Universe.—Employments in Heaven.—Cheering Views.

EVERY one must feel interested to learn all that can be learned respecting the celestial body which the soul is to inhabit beyond the grave. The Bible presents us with some hints upon this subject which are worthy of being carefully treasured up. In investigating this theme, let us observe that,

1. It is evident that the soul, in the future world as in this, will inhabit a body of some kind or other. Spiritualism and materialism will there, as here, be combined. "For we know," says Paul, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands,

eternal in the heavens.”* The apostle here evidently refers to the body which the soul occupies in this world, and which it is to exchange for another body in the world to come. Many persons seem to shrink from the frank acceptance of the vivid revelations of God’s Word upon this point.

Notwithstanding the distinct representations of the Scriptures of the resurrection of the body, and the reunion of soul and body in heaven, there are multitudes of Christians who have only a conception of an exceedingly vague and shadowy existence in the future world, without any dignity or beauty to give it attraction to the human mind. They dream of heaven as the abode of naked spirit, without form or outline, placeless—a sort of Brahminic absorption, in the contemplation of Deity, infinitely diffused. They even shrink from the conception of the future home of the blessed as realms of hills and vales, lakes and rivers, rural mansions and metropolitan cities, fruits and flowers, green pastures and still waters, bird songs and angel songs, robes, and harps, and crowns, and the plumage of seraphic wings, as in loved companionship they soar through the realms of space; they shrink from these conceptions,

* 2 Cor., v., 1.

so vividly delineated by the pencil of inspiration, fearing that they are too material and earthly.

The cheerless views of heaven which many have cherished have not been gathered from the glowing imagery, from the vivid and exhilarating revelations of God's Word. There is no truth more conspicuous there than that there is a *celestial body* as well as a *terrestrial body*; and that this body, sown in corruption, and dishonor, and weakness, shall be raised a body of incorruption, and glory, and power, with which the soul shall be united forever. The immortal spirit, which now occupies space, dwelling in these fleshly tabernacles, shall then occupy space, and possess distinct individuality, and stand out in prominent and well-defined outline as one perfect, glorious organization, moving here and there, as personally identical, as capable of recognition, as any one whose material form now arrests the eye and wins the heart.

It is a great delusion to imagine that imperfection and impurity are necessarily connected with materialism. The sunbeams, electric fluid, impalpable gases, are material, and, for aught we know, they may be as pure and eternal as spirit itself. The electric fire which gleams

from the midnight cloud may be woven into angel robes, which shall be as enduring as the souls whose celestial forms they attire.

The Apostle Paul was especially earnest in teaching this doctrine of the resurrection of the body, as though conscious that human philosophy, in its ignorance, would attempt its subversion.

"If there be no resurrection of the dead," says Paul, "then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."*

2. It is also important in this connection to observe that the celestial body is not a new creation, but a *resurrection*. The body in which our Savior presented himself to his disciples after his crucifixion was the body which had been conveyed lifeless to the tomb, and which he had always assured them should rise from that tomb without seeing corruption. The disciples felt of this body. It could assume various forms, and pass at will from place to place. Our Savior ate with his disciples, con-

* 1 Cor., xv., 13, 14, 17, 20.

versed with them as man with man, and then, in clouds of glory, with this body, soared on high.

The same body that is buried is to be raised, but not to be raised in the same condition in which it was buried. The kernel of wheat, the same kernel that is sown, rises from its burial; but how different is the beautiful stalk, waving in golden ripeness in the autumnal breeze, from the dry and withered grain placed beneath the soil! The wind blows the seed of an elm into the meadow. It germinates and rises from its burial. Half a century passes away, and there stands the lordly tree, proud monarch of the fields. Noble oxen browse beneath its shades, and birds of varied song and plumage rear their young and sing their anthems within its wide-spreading branches. How majestic the towering elm! and yet it is but the resurrection of a diminutive seed.

The same body that is buried is to be raised. It is buried in corruption; it is to be raised in incorruption. It is buried in dishonor; it is to be raised in glory. It is buried in weakness; it is to be raised in power. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

When the trump of the archangel shall sound, proclaiming that time shall be no longer, "All that are in their graves," says Christ, "shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."* "The sea shall give up the dead that are in it; and all the dead, small and great, shall stand before God." "He that raised up Christ from the dead," says Paul, "shall also quicken (ζωοποιήσῃ, bring to life) your mortal bodies."† Again, he writes to the Philippians, "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."‡

This same transformation which shall take place in the bodies of the dead, as they rise from the grave at the summons of the archangel, shall also take place in the bodies of those who may be living at that time. The living will not leave their bodies behind them. These fleshly tabernacles will not be annihilated; but, transformed into celestial grandeur and beauty, they shall pierce infinity on tire-

* John, v., 29.

† Rom., viii., 11.

‡ Phil., iii., 20, 21.

less wings, which shall soar to blend with the plumage of cherubim and seraphim who surround the throne of God. Thus will all be changed. In the case of the living as of the dead, there will be a renovation, a reconstruction of the same body which lies mouldering in the grave, or which is animated with life in the morning of the resurrection.

It is very unwise to adduce philosophical objections against the clear revelations of God's Word. All human philosophy is at present so imperfect that it deserves but little respect when it comes in direct antagonism with the Bible. There may be *apparent* antagonisms, which may disappear in the light of higher principles of Biblical interpretation, or in the progressive elucidations of science; but if the Bible do not teach the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, it is difficult to conceive what it can teach. That truth is affirmed in the most emphatic declarations, and is illustrated with the most impressive imagery.

No chemical analysis has as yet been able to reach the ultimate elementary principles of which these bodies consist, and, consequently, the philosophy which denies the possibility of the resurrection is but the conceit of ignorance. Let the corporeal elements which compose

these bodies be dispersed as widely as they may, and let them enter into any other combinations which God may choose, where is the philosopher so audacious as to assert that these elements, by their dispersion, lose their vitality, and can not, by the power of God, be recollected and recombined? How much more intellectual and philosophic is the faith which Henry Kirke White has expressed so beautifully in verse!

“These ashes too, this little dust,
Our Father’s care shall keep
Till the last angel rise and break
The long and dreary sleep.”

Let the imagination exhaust itself in the contemplation of the dispersion of these corporeal atoms, still, nothing can be more easy than for divine wisdom and power to protect every particle of these elements, and to reunite them in a resurrection body, incorruptible, powerful, and glorious. He who formed these bodies, and controls the movements of every atom of matter, can easily preserve those particles in their various dispersions and combinations; and he who formed these bodies from the dust of the earth, with bone, and sinew, and agile limb, and glowing blood, and throbbing heart, and sparkling eye, can surely, from these bod-

ies, construct others in any degree of perfection and grandeur, refined from every ingredient of grossness and decay.

He who has seen the cradle of the butterfly in the tomb of the caterpillar; who has thus beheld, emerging from the grave of the worm, the most beautiful of insects, graceful, buoyant, combining in its delicate yet gorgeous loveliness the most exquisite tints of the lily and the rose—he who has seen and admired this fair creation, and remembers that it is but the resurrection of one of the most loathsome of insects, will be slow to deny that from these bodies there may emerge from the tomb the form of an archangel, winged for an eternal flight, and adorned with grace, and beauty, and grandeur, which shall add attractions even to that world where cherubim fly and seraphim sing.

“Yet wert thou once a worm—a thing that crept
On the bare earth, then wrought a tomb and slept;
And such is man: soon from his cell of clay
To burst, a seraph, in the blaze of day.”

There is surely no philosophy which can controvert the declaration of Locke, that “it is not more incomprehensible that a glorious, immortal body should arise from a mass of corruption than that all this variety of splendid forms should arise from nothing.”

3. These thoughts lead necessarily to the observation that the change the body is to undergo in its resurrection from the grave will be very great. Though the resurrection body will be *material* in its elements, it will not be a body of flesh and blood. And, though we may not be prepared to accept the suggestion of the distinguished physical philosopher, Professor Hitchcock, that the future body may be composed of "the luminiferous ether, that attenuated medium by which light, and heat, and electricity are transmitted from one part of the universe to the other by undulations of inconceivable velocity," the suggestion shows that, even in the light of our blind philosophy, we can *conceive* of material bodies freed from all possible imperfection, which no harm can reach, and which no lapse of ages can impair.

It is only in general terms that the Bible speaks to us of the resurrection body. It declares that it will present an aspect inconceivably glorious, and that it will be endowed with powers which we can now but feebly comprehend. Gravitation is the chain which confines us prisoners of sin to a ruined world. The resurrection body will not feel this chain. Unfettered, imponderable, it will soar away obedient to every wish. The body of Elijah was thus transformed when,

“To mount on high,
He took, in fiery pomp, the chariot of the sky.”

The body with which our Savior rose from the grave had shaken off all the *clogs* and *chains* of materialism. Thought is not more free than were his movements. Imagination has not a flight less frictionless than that with which our Savior moved, as volition impelled, passage through space requiring no time, bars of iron and walls of stone presenting no obstacle, till finally, with invisible wings, he glided upward through the skies to that world of glory, where his disciples are to be with him also.

There is no form of beauty which can be conceived superior to that of the human frame. The Venus de Medici enchants the world. All men do homage to the Apollo Belvidere. These renowned statues have for ages drawn millions to bow before them in admiration of the most exquisite feminine loveliness and the most godlike manly dignity. The angels who have occasionally appeared in our skies, or have entered the abodes of men, have always appeared in the perfection of human forms. Adam and Eve, in their sinless state, were manifestly so created. This renders it at least not improbable that the present organism of the human frame, remodeled to lineaments of the

most exquisite grace and beauty, may be revived beyond the grave. A very slight alteration in complexion and features will change a countenance which is repulsive into surpassing loveliness.

Thus the resurrection body, though retaining essentially the present order of structure, may as far surpass the Medicean Venus and the Pythian Apollo, in symmetric grace and in beaming loveliness, as those world-renowned statues excel the most dwarfed and revolting forms to be found in the hovels of the Hottentot or the Esquimaux. It is also worthy of remark that there may be a very strong resemblance between two persons, one of whom may be very beautiful, and the other may possess features coarse and repulsive. Thus it is not impossible that in the future world we shall see, beaming from the countenances of angels radiant with celestial beauty, the lineaments of loved ones on earth, who have left impressions upon the heart never to be effaced. The angel mother shall there smile again upon her child with the same smile, but now celestialized, with which she enkindled the love of her babe when in its cradle. Hence Dr. Dwight says,

“It is, I think, sufficiently evident that man-

kind will know each other in the future world, and that their bodies will be so far the same as to become the means of this knowledge."

4. It is also worthy of observation that the spiritual body must be capable of rapid motion, exceeding the sunbeam's speed, and leaving the lightning a loiterer in the race. There is such a *place* as heaven—such a distinct locality. This must be admitted, unless we spiritualize away the plain teachings of the Bible into the most empty mysticism. Heaven is represented to us as the capital of God's empire, resplendent with divine brilliance, from whence emanates God's law, and from whence his winged messengers communicate to the remotest provinces his will.

We know not where, within the bounds of limitless space, God has reared that metropolis, honored by his visible presence, which infinitely outvies all his other works. It is, however, a natural thought that heaven should be the central point of the created universe. From this central throne the vision of Deity may sweep through circling abysses of space, which no human arithmetic can compute, and no mortal imagination can scan.

Planets, suns, systems, comets, countless clusters of countless suns, in profusion which the

Almighty mind alone can comprehend, may sweep in circling homage around his throne. How magnificent the conception that all the myriads of worlds which the telescope has revealed are but the remote frontier embellishments of the city of our God; that in that central metropolis he has reared those palaces which archangels throng; that there he has assembled the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers of his high court; that there divinely-selected choirs of cherubim and seraphim peal forth their choral anthems!

From this central court the whole universe of created worlds may be explored. They are as islets floating in the ocean of God's glory. The spaces intervening, almost incomprehensible to finite minds, do but give scope to angelic activity, and may ever sparkle with the brilliance of celestial plumage, as these heavenly ambassadors wing their flight from sphere to sphere with velocity which the lightning can not rival.

Lord Rosse's great telescope reveals celestial objects at such inconceivable distances that light, traveling at the rate of two hundred thousand miles in a second of time, would occupy twenty thousand years in passing from one of those worlds to ours. As you look

through the telescope, and see that point of ineffable brightness blazing in the depths of infinity, and reflect that a ray of light, leaving that world at the birth of Adam, and shooting forward in its direct path with velocity which would compass this globe eight times in one second—that it has continued at that speed for months, and years, and lingering centuries, as generations have come and gone, as empires have flourished and decayed, and that even now it has not accomplished even one third of the journey, the imagination sinks bewildered and exhausted with the sublime contemplation.

And yet that world may be in the remote frontier of God's empire; and were you transported to its hills, with the most powerful telescope which human skill has ever formed, you might not be able to discern, far away in the measureless distance, the resplendent city of our God; but from that burning throne where Deity unveils its majesty, governing every world as if each world were the only object of the divine care—nay, watching over each individual, however humble he may be, with as much minuteness of attention as if that individual alone engrossed all the energies of the divine mind—from that central court God's ambassadors may unceasing-

ly wing their flight to all the provinces of his empire.

We learn in the book of Daniel that, during the time in which Daniel was offering his evening prayer, the angel Gabriel was sent from the supreme heavens with a message to him. Thus he came from God's throne to this earth without apparently one moment being occupied in his flight.

"The speed of angels Time counts not."

We perhaps can get some faint glimpse of the speed of celestial motion from the facility with which we can transport our *minds* to any distant scene with which we have been familiar. It matters not how remote those scenes may be, instantaneously the spirit wings to them its flight, and all their attractions are opened before the mind's eye. The reader can instantly revisit the home of his childhood, however far away, though mountains rise and oceans roll between. There is the yard, and the garden, and the dear old home. There are father and mother again, seated with the family group around the fireside. The mind has, apparently without occupying an instant of time, passed over hundreds, even thousands of miles. It can as easily cross the ocean, and

visit the most distant realms, as it can send its mental glance into the next room. All this the ethereal spirit can do, even in this world, when clogged by the fleshly body.

It is not improbable that, in some similar way in the future world, the redeemed soul, wedded to a body of celestial perfection, can at will, and with a speed which time marks not, traverse all the abysses of infinite space, and visit the remotest orb which glows in the firmament of the Creator.

It is an indisputable doctrine of Scripture that the redeemed in the future world will be equal to the angels. Hence we may cherish the hope that it will be our privilege hereafter to visit every luminary which glitters in the sky. We may yet be familiar with all those wondrous orbs which astronomy has revealed to us. We may find that all the worlds the telescope has unveiled, compared with the mighty whole, are no more than a handful of sand contrasted with the innumerable grains accumulated upon the ocean's shore; and yet we may alight on every orb, luxuriate in their flowery vales, and be greeted by the hospitalities of their thronging populations.

Think me not fanciful in these representations. Such are the visions which God has re-

vealed to us to animate us to a holy life. Blind unbelief would reject an alluring heaven, that the mind may continue to grope and delve amid the dust of earth. These are the views which are cherished by thousands of the most sober students of God's Word. Dr. Dwight, who surely will not be accused of visionary tendencies, says,

“We may hereafter visit distant worlds with incomparably more ease than we can now pass from one continent to another, and find the oceans of space by which they are separated merely means of illustrating our activity and furnishing delightful opportunities of expatiating at our pleasure.”

Such are some of the more prominent of the representations of the Bible respecting the spiritual body. The vision we thus get, though dim, is indeed animating, for we know that even imagination can not exaggerate the glory and the blessedness of that state. When the soul is on fire with the glow of its ardent anticipations, we know that the reality will far surpass all that the heart can conceive.

Christian, let this revelation of future blessedness disarm time of its troubles. In perplexities, and disappointments, and thick-gathering clouds of earthly gloom, look forward to the

bright morning of the resurrection, to your emerging from the grave with a body fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, spiritual, incorruptible, powerful, a fitting ally of a soul almost infinitely expanded in every perfection. Are you in trouble? It is but for a moment. Do dark nights of sorrow overshadow you? Soon will the light of the glorious morning of the resurrection emblazon the skies and enapture your heart. Be of good cheer. Let the knowledge of joy coming in the morning cheer you through the night. Gird up your strength, and smile at the passing momentary storm.

And let this revelation of future blessedness animate you to fidelity, to toil, to prayer. What will all earthly interests avail you in that hour? Piety will be then your only wealth, the only treasure of your heart. Look at your families, your children, your friends, your neighbors. You will meet them again on that morning, and they will be angels or fiends. The friends with whom you now are associated are either spirits of woe in mortal guise, journeying to interminable despair, or angel spirits, soon to throw off their mortal clogs, and to soar in the congenial element of their Father's home.

And can any one be willing to barter all these joys of a heavenly home, this celestial

dignity and glory, for the unsatisfying pleasures of a godless life? Look at the black hearse which bears the shrouded corpse to the grave, and reflect upon your own inevitable and speedy destiny. Oh, dying man, for what are you living? For pleasure? It is but the vapor of the morning. For honor? There is no honor for him who shall awake at the archangel's trump to shame and everlasting contempt. For wealth? You brought nothing into this world, and you can carry nothing out. Your houses and stores will soon be burned up. Your lands will vanish in flame and smoke. The archangel's trumpet will soon pierce your ear, cold in death; and the morning of the resurrection and the throne of judgment will soon gleam upon your eye. Is it wise to be heedless, prayerless, irreligious? Is it wise to bid defiance to the terrors of the day of endless doom? Is it wise to forget your immortality, and to live as

“Spouse of the worm, and brother of the clay?”

CHAPTER X.

HEAVENLY RECOGNITION.

The Cravings of the Soul.—Adam in Eden.—Poetic Description.—The new Eden.—The Nature of Heaven's Enjoyments.—Peculiarity of the Divine Existence.—Heaven as a City.—Heaven a Scene of rural Beauty.—The Discoveries of modern Astronomy.—Jupiter.—The Sun.—Star-clusters.—Immensity of God's Works.—Philosophical Testimony.—Scripture Testimony.

WILL earthly friendships be renewed in heaven? Are the ties which here on earth bind heart with heart, and the sympathies which cheer us on this terrestrial pilgrimage, to perish with the body in the grave, or to live with the immortal mind in heaven? No one has ever buried a friend without feeling the rush of these thoughts upon the soul. Nature has no question more earnest than this. The *heart* gives an instantaneous response. I must have, it says, the loved and the lost restored. Heaven's sun would be eclipsed; a sombre day would darken all its vales and wither its flowers if those chords of affection, which have vi-

brated so sweetly upon earth, are never to vibrate there.

There are some Christians who look forward with so much confidence to a reunion with friends in heaven, that the discussion of a question to their minds so plain seems to them quite needless; but there are many other Christians who have very faint views of their heavenly home, and have great fears of dishonoring the spirituality of celestial joys by commingling with them any of the elements of earthly happiness. They think it safer to regard heaven simply as the place where they will be with their Savior, and they turn with alarm from even the vivid material delineations which God's Word gives of that home of the blessed.

The question, therefore, of the recognition of friends in heaven, involving, as that question does, the very nature of heaven, and the essential character of its enjoyments, becomes one of the most important which can be presented to the human mind. God has not left us to grope our way in darkness upon a subject so vital as this. Both reason and revelation unite their most emphatic voices to instruct us upon this theme.

1. Let us first contemplate the condition of

Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. This world, the wreck of which, though God's curse rests upon it, is still so beautiful, was prepared for man—a mansion worthy of its divine Architect. It was reared as a home, adapted in every respect to gratify all the wants of the noble beings who were to dwell upon it. The world being thus created and adorned, then came Adam, fashioned from God's hand, its lord and master. In delighted motion he, its brightest ornament, with godlike intelligence beaming from his eye, glided along the avenues whose beauties invited his steps.

The fragrance of a blooming world was around him. His ear was filled with melody. Bounding with celestial instincts before him were animals of varied beauty, all emulous to minister to his pleasure. There were flowers, and fruits, and song; hills and vales, lakes and rivers, groves and bowers. It was a garden which God had planned and embellished as one of the ornaments of heaven, where angels might love to linger—a garden so beautiful that the Lord God himself, as revelation informs us, was attracted to its bowers in the "cool of the day." When the sun of Adam's first day sank behind the hills, and the stars beamed forth in the sky, the balmy air and fra-

grant pillows invited to such repose as a perfect spirit only can know.

But something was still wanting to complete the happiness of Adam. The body was perfect in all its organization. The mind, ethereal in its powers, was the delighted recipient of all the knowledge rushing in upon it. The eye saw nothing but beauty. The ear heard nothing but melody. Every sense had its full indulgence. Yet there was one thing wanting—*one thing*, without which all else were but dust and ashes.

Give me, said the heart, a friend. Without a companion with sympathetic soul, these flowers will soon fade upon my eye, this melody will fall mournfully upon my ear, and this garden of Eden will be a dreary place of exile, in which immortality will be a curse. It is not good, said God, that man should be alone. He gave him a friend; and Eden now becomes indeed a paradise, and loved companionship gives flight to the swift-winged hours. Adam was then one of God's sinless children, and his wants were such wants as angels have.

Very beautifully has Campbell alluded to this loneliness of Adam in Eden before Eve was given to him as a companion:

“Till Hymen brought his love-delighted hour,
There dwelt no joy in Eden’s rosy bower!
In vain the viewless seraph lingering there,
At starry midnight charm’d the silent air;
In vain the wild-bird caroled on the steep,
To hail the sun, slow wheeling from the deep;
In vain, to soothe the solitary shade,
Aerial notes in mingling measure play’d;
The summer wind that shook the spangled tree,
The whispering wave, the murmur of the bee;
Still slowly pass’d the melancholy day,
And still the stranger wist not where to stray.
The world was sad! the garden was a wild!
And man, the hermit, sighed, till woman smiled!”*

This world is the same world upon which Eden bloomed, only now wilted by a curse. Redemption shall take from the earth its malediction, and Eden shall bloom in renewed loveliness, such as Adam and Eve never witnessed. Purified in the flames of the last conflagration, it shall emerge a new earth, to take its place again among the rejoicing morning stars. The green pastures and still waters of a celestial paradise shall again expand before the eye. There shall be groves vocal with sweeter songs, and scenes embellished with richer beauty than those which entranced Adam and Eve in the morning of their innocence. And over all there shall be spread the canopy of skies bril-

* Pleasures of Hope, part ii.

liant with hitherto unknown splendor. Man, not only regenerated, but exalted to glory and power which he possessed not before the fall, shall again take possession of this renovated globe, thus prepared for its occupants rescued from sin through the sufferings of the Son of God.

And shall there not be found in this new Eden the endearments of friendship? The first Eden is but the dim shadow of the far more effulgent second. We can not conceive that a new Eden should thus be reared shorn of its brightest joy; that when every other flower blooms, and every other joy is magnified, the pleasures of memory shall die and long-cherished loves perish! It can not be that those who have loved each other upon earth shall meet side by side in that blissful world with no recognition. It can not be that those who have toiled, and wept, and prayed, and rejoiced together in this fallen world, will meet as strangers in the celestial paradise. There must be rapturous greetings there, such as angelic hearts only can know.

2. The philosophy of the human mind instructs us in the necessity of this recognition. What is it that constitutes personal identity? Why is one to-day the same person that he

was yesterday? You sleep; you awake yourself, and not another. What constitutes your personal identity? It is memory; the consciousness of past sins over which you grieve; of past joys still cheering the soul; of past friendships still fondly cherished. There is life in the past. You stand upon an eminence, and look back upon the path your weary feet have trod. Without this consciousness virtue can have no reward, without it vice can have no punishment.

Thus it is utterly incredible that in heaven any Lethean wave shall obliterate the memories of time, its loves, its hallowed griefs, its sacred ties, so strong that, when riven, soul and body seem sundered. Will there be no emotions of gratitude there in view of dangers through which God has safely led us here? And if you, by the power of memory and consciousness, retain your personal identity in heaven, and there look back upon your earthly home, and recall scenes of childhood, and youth, and maturity, and old age, parental names and features, and reminiscences of friends—if memory there, with all the other powers of the soul, is retained, exalted, and purified, will there not be blissful recognitions and enthusiastic greetings as other redeemed ones,

standing by your side, recall also the scenes through which you perhaps are now moving in sympathetic companionship? There seems to be thus a philosophical necessity for this recognition.

3. The nature of heaven's enjoyments indicates this recognition. Friendship, loved companionship, the purest and loftiest of all the earthly sources of happiness, is ever represented in the Bible as one of the most exalted and most ennobling of the joys of heaven.

There is something in the divine existence itself, as the nature of our heavenly Father is revealed to us in God's Word, which, to my mind, throws interesting light upon this subject. When I think of God as a solitary, all-pervading Spirit, companionless upon his eternal throne from eternity to eternity, with no congenial associate, and no coequal heart throbbing responsive to his affections—true, there is sublimity in the conception, but I am overwhelmed, chilled, by the awful thought. Can this solitary monarch, with clouds and darkness around his throne, with no one to comprehend his thoughts, no partner to enjoy his confidence—can he have sympathy for such wants as agitate my frail heart? Can I go to him with childlike confidence? I fear and tremble

in the presence of a being so incomprehensible and august.

But when I read that in the bosom of the Father dwells the coequal Son and Spirit; that in the unity of the Deity there is the trinity of love, and sympathy, and companionship; that, while God is one, and one only, there is in his very nature the provision for the yearnings of heart and the longings for fellowship, I feel a new sympathy in my heavenly Father. Like him, and with similar yearnings, he has formed me his child. The merely intellectual idea of an eternal spirit pervading infinity is changed into the warm reality of an affection-sharing and companion-loving Father.

As thus, in the pages of revelation, I catch glimpses, delightful, though dim, of the friendship of united hearts even in the Godhead—of ties of union so mysteriously intimate that, while in love, and joy, and converse there are three, in purpose, and nature, and essence there is but one, thus combining the perfection both of companionship and of unity—my soul is cheered by the vision, and with love I fall before the throne, crying *Father!*

And thus it seems that in all the delineations we have of heaven's enjoyments, the union of congenial hearts is an essential ele-

ment. Is heaven represented as a city? Its gates of pearl and streets of gold are thronged by the rejoicing multitudes, lovingly blending their songs. The avenues of this city of our God are lined with mansions which the divine Architect has reared, and cherubim and seraphim, in exulting bands, pass and repass those hospitable thresholds. The river of the water of life flows through the city, inviting to such festival joys as make glad the hearts of its inhabitants.

Is heaven represented as a scene of rural beauty? There rise, in towering cliffs, the hills of Zion. Valleys, green and still, sweep along the declivities of the mountains, with groves, and lakes, and flowers, and birds filling the air with their songs, and embellishing the whole beauteous landscape with the brilliance of their plumage. And all this scene of peace and loveliness, the very thought of which now refreshes man's weary spirit, is enlivened by the presence of angel bands, who, in social joy, find all material sources of happiness infinitely magnified, and who pluck the fruits, and gather the flowers, and recline in the arbors which God has ripened, and painted, and embellished.

And now the plumage of outspread pinions glitters in the air, as, soaring upward and on-

ward in blissful association, they pass through realms of space limitless in extent, and crowded to profusion with the wondrous architecture of the Almighty; and now they give utterance to their rapture in songs and hallelujahs, which, coming from the multitudinous voices of the blessed, cause even heaven's most distant arches to resound with the harmony.

Christian, canst thou gaze upon these scenes, and mingle with this throng, and aid to swell these anthems with the glorified friend by thy side, whose heart now throbs sympathetically with thine own, and yet there be no recognition—memory dead, spiritual affection dead? You have wept, and prayed, and struggled for weary years that you might meet in this happy world, and, now that you have met, can it be that you know it not? Has God made the heart to be thus treacherous to its noblest impulses? No, no; the sanctified love of earth will beam more brightly and glow more warmly in heaven.

4. The discoveries of modern astronomy reflect interesting light upon this subject. True science and revelation have ever been the handmaids of each other. God's words and his works are in harmony. They illustrate and explain each other.

The Word of God assures us that many mansions are reared for God's children, varying in glory, adapted to meet all the wants of the celestial hierarchy, angel and archangel, cherubim and seraphim. Science affords us a few faint glimpses of their astonishing number and gorgeousness.

Look at that planet which we have named Jupiter, with its soft and moonlike lustre. It seems but as a golden spangle upon the ebon sky. It is one of the mansions which our Father has reared. Science measures its distance, its magnitude, its capacity for receiving inhabitants. To our questionings science responds that it is a spacious globe, nearly fifteen hundred times larger than that upon which we dwell, affording ample accommodations for a population more than fifty times greater than all united who have existed upon this earth during the whole period since the creation. Who can imagine the grandeur of the hills and vales spread over this vast surface, or the joys of those probably sinless inhabitants who crowd its mansions!

From this beaming planet turn your attention to the sun—that regal mansion which, from its illuminated windows, irradiates with floods of light all the members of the solar sys-

tem. Were this mansion empty, within its walls might be placed thirteen hundred thousand worlds as large as ours. Were the centre of the sun placed where the centre of the earth now is, its circumference would extend one hundred and sixty thousand miles in every direction beyond the orbit swept by our moon, filling the whole of that space with its majestic mass. No human mind can comprehend the magnitude of such an orb.

According to the observations of Herschel, Arago, and others, the sun is an opaque and solid world, encompassed first by a vaporous element; then by luminous envelopes, from whence are radiated those floods of light which gleam upon the eye of countless myriads. The occasional openings in these luminous clouds, enabling us to look in upon the solid body of the sun, are supposed to be the cause of the dark spots upon the sun with which all are familiar. Mountains and vales, embellished with celestial beauty, doubtless adorn its surface. No night probably ever darkens its sky; no winter chills its air or blights its fruit. Surely a lofty race must people this realm—must rejoice in the apartments of this our Father's house.

The variety in the structure of these worlds

is apparently endless. Sirius is probably vastly larger than our sun, for it shines with a light sixty times more intense. There are twin suns and triple suns revolving around each other, but at such inconceivable distances from us that their planetary retinue of worlds can not be discerned. There are suns which the telescope opens to us, green, blue, purple, and orange, yellow and red. There are suns which shine with a revolving light, now beaming with inconceivable brilliance, and now fading into darkness. There are clusters of suns insulated in the heavens, bound together as a family in closest companionship, and yet in numbers so countless that astronomy speaks of them as "star dust." These flaming orbs, thus spread through infinity, Carlyle has called "the street-lamps in the city of our God."

There are regions in the heavens far more densely filled with worlds than those upon which our eyes gaze. Herschel discovered a space, not larger than that occupied by our solar system, where there are fifty thousand suns brilliantly shining. Who can conceive the gorgeousness of such a scene? Suppose that there were fifty thousand suns suddenly to flame up in our sky, some as near to us as the moon, and none farther distant than the re-

motest planet of our system. Night would immediately disappear forever. The reign of eternal sunshine, and such sunshine as no mortal imagination has ever yet conceived, would be established.

Thus is immensity, through profundities of space which no imagination can conceive, filled with these mansions of God, scattered every where with creative profusion. We can not begin to compute their numbers. Millions upon millions are as nothing in their sum. Above, beneath, around us, infinity seems strewn with these glittering orbs.

Now when we connect with these revelations of God's works the teachings of his Word, that from the grave the body is to arise purified, spiritualized, and to be as immortal as the soul itself; that, raised in honor, and glory, and power, it is to be winged for an eternal flight, we can not but follow it as it mounts exultant on triumphant wing to these distant worlds. You, oh Christian, as the child and the heir of Almighty God, are to inherit this universe. God has made all these mansions for you, his child. This orb of day is yours; these planets, these stars, these newly-revealed firmaments of clustered suns are all your own, the palaces God has given in common to all his children.

As other angels move from world to world

in ministrations of duty and of pleasure, so may you be employed upon such embassies, and be greeted with such welcomes as angels only can give. Such is the prospect unfolded before us in the career of immortality. And surely, in such residences of splendor, your heart glowing with affection, your soul regenerated and purified from every stain, and your body made celestial, there will be scope for loving companionship such as now can be but faintly conceived.

“It is impossible for immortal man, with the light of revelation as his guide, to doubt for a moment that on the celestial spheres his future is to be spent—spent, doubtless, in lofty inquiries, in social intercourse, in the renewal of domestic ties, and in the service of his Almighty Benefactor. With such a vista before us, so wide in its expanse, and so remote in its termination, what scenes of beauty, what forms of the sublime, what enjoyments, physical and intellectual, may we not anticipate—wisdom to the sage, rest to the pilgrim, and gladness to the broken in heart.”*

5. But to conclude: there are many passages of Scripture which will be considered decisive upon this question. David, upon the death of his child, comforted himself with the assurance,

* “More Worlds than One,” as quoted by Macdonald.

"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." The anguish of the wicked, we are informed, shall be increased as they shall "see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob sitting down in the kingdom of God," while they are cast out. The rich man and Lazarus are represented as recognizing each other, though the great gulf was spread between them. Moses and Elias appeared together on the Mount of Transfiguration, and were even recognized by the disciples, who had never seen them before. Paul anticipated the pleasure of presenting to Christ the disciples who had been saved by his labors: "Lord, here am I, and the children thou hast given me."

There is, therefore, evidence sufficient to remove all reasonable doubt that the sanctified friendships of earth will be cemented anew in heaven. There shall the Christian meet his Christian friend in union more intimate and rapturous than earth hath ever known. In those blissful bowers, or soaring in those resplendent skies, or treading the golden pavements of the heavenly city, or in visiting the orbs which fill immensity—as the Christian moves through all these scenes, himself a lofty spirit, he shall find all these joys magnified by *love*, which is the essence of Deity and the atmosphere of heaven.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

The Doctrines of Christianity.—Evidence of their Reasonableness.—The Duties Christianity enjoins.—The Measures Christianity adopts.—The Christian Ministry.—The Church.—Ordinances of Christianity.—The Sabbath.—Baptism.—The Lord's Supper.—The Effects of Christianity.—Death of the Unbeliever.—Testimony of ancient Greeks.—The two Death-bed Scenes.

WERE not Christianity eminently a reasonable system, commending itself to the most enlightened judgment of the mind, it could by no means maintain the sway which it has gained over the most intelligent and powerful portion of the globe. It is a reasonable system—reasonable in its doctrines, in the duties it requires, in its measures, its ordinances, and its effects.

Look at the doctrines of Christianity. That the loadstone should always point to the north is a truth above reason, but not contrary to reason. That the senseless fibres of the peach-tree should in the dark ground select materials of beauty, and fragrance, and luxury, convey them up the trunk to the branch, and there un-

fold them in a flower, and then mould them into fruit which charms the eye and melts upon the palate, is above reason, but not contrary to reason. Thus, in God's Word, there are doctrines revealed above reason, but not contrary to reason.

Does any one say explain the reasonableness of trinity in unity? I reply, who can declare its unreasonableness? The soul of man is complex—no one can tell how complex. Man seems to have a triune nature, body, intellect, and affections composing his single being. How, then, can any one say that the nature of Deity may not be complex, so that in some way, incomprehensible to us, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost may constitute one God?

That this assertion is not unreasonable is evidenced from the fact that the most powerful intellects on earth have given their assent to the Trinity. Who may pronounce what is reasonable, if Fénelon, Pascal, Melancthon may not. These men, whose teachings have illumined centuries, accept with homage the revelation of a trinity in the Godhead.

Where can you find a natural philosopher of more renown than Robert Boyle, or a statesman of more comprehensive views than Wilberforce, or an orator of more commanding

powers than Edmund Burke, or a metaphysician of shrewder intellect than Bishop Butler, or a scholar of more varied attainments than Samuel Johnson, or a linguist who has explored wider fields of literature than William Jones? yet they all declare that, to their minds, there is nothing unreasonable in the doctrine of the Trinity.

This may be considered a test doctrine. That faith which for eighteen centuries has been the guide of the great majority of the wise and good in all lands; which has been embraced by the ripest scholars, the most profound reasoners, the most distinguished philosophers—by statesmen and philanthropists of the highest name and note; that faith which has sustained millions through the trials of life, and given them exultation in the hour of death, surely must be pronounced to be at least reasonable.

2. Christianity is reasonable in the duties which it enjoins. What are those duties? First, penitence. Have we not all sinned? Do not our own consciences confirm the declarations of the Bible upon this point? And is it unreasonable that we should go to our offended Maker with a contrite spirit, and with the prayer, "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner?"

Next to penitence comes faith. And what

is faith? It is the childlike and cordial assent of the heart to the way of salvation which God has provided. We can not be saved by works, for we have all broken the law. We are already condemned. Our only refuge is in a pardon. God informs us on what conditions that pardon may be granted. His Son has died for us, to vindicate the majesty of the violated law. Is it unreasonable that we should receive salvation humbly through faith in that Savior?

Look at the blood-bought throng in heaven, casting their crowns at the feet of their Redeemer, saying, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,"* and then can one say that it is unreasonable to rely upon the efficacy of atoning blood? Will any mortal man venture to say, "I have no need of an atoning Savior; I have no need of redemption by the blood of Jesus?"

Next to faith, or rather in conjunction with it, is obedience—obedience to the eternal law of supreme love to God and universal love for man. It is surely reasonable that I should love that being who is my Creator and my

* Rev., v., 9.

daily benefactor, and that I should daily offer him the homage of an affectionate and grateful heart. It is surely reasonable that I should feel an interest in the temporal and eternal welfare of my fellow-man; that I should do every thing in my power, by my prayers, my example, and my efforts, to win all to Christ.

3. Christianity is reasonable in its measures. An object may be good, and yet the measures adopted for the accomplishment of that object may be bad. The measures instituted for the promotion of Christianity are all good.

Christ established the Gospel ministry. He set apart a body of men to be entirely consecrated to the moral welfare of the community. They were to devote their whole time to this work, studying the Scriptures, preaching the Gospel, watching over the children and youth, visiting the sick and the afflicted.

Is it not this institution which is spreading peace, and intelligence, and plenty over the hills and vales of our own land? Is it not the influence of the preached Gospel which has rendered England and Scotland such bright spots upon this globe? Did not our system of common schools, the temperance reform, the Sabbath-school enterprise, the Seaman's Friend and Prison Discipline societies—those guardian

angels of our land—did not they all, with other enterprises too numerous to be mentioned, originate in this institution? Were they not all called into life by the voice of the Christian ministry from the bosom of the Christian Church?

What scheme can human intelligence imagine better calculated than the Christian ministry to promote the intellectual elevation and the moral improvement of any community? No one can stately attend the faithful preaching of the Gospel without finding the mind enlarged, the heart purified, and the manners even ameliorated, and polished, and softened.

Christ established a Church, the members of which are bound together by a public pledge. They are to meet together and pray for a divine blessing. They are to watch over one another, and encourage each other by their mutual exhortations and prayers. If men are interested in temperance, in politics, in philosophy, they necessarily form associations, and assemble for the promotion of these objects. Is it not reasonable, then, that those who are interested in religion, in their own eternal salvation and that of others, should consecrate their plighted faith to this noblest of enterprises—should meet together to sing Zion's

songs, to implore the aid of Zion's King, and, by mutual zeal, to animate to mutual fervor? Surely it is reasonable.

As another measure, Christ requires each disciple, in his private capacity, to do every thing in his power to win others to the Savior. He is a laborer, to work till night come. He is a soldier who is enlisted for the war. As he sits by the fireside, as he visits the dwellings of his friends, as he meets his neighbors in the streets, as he sympathizes with the bereaved in the darkened chambers of death, he, with a warm heart—with zeal tempered by discretion—must seek to win all to piety. Shall I, as a temperance man, try to save my brother from temporal wretchedness, and shall I not, as a religious man, endeavor to save him from eternal woe?

These are the measures of Christianity. Surely they are reasonable. They are calm, noiseless, unobtrusive, orderly, effective. They refine the mind, the manners, and the heart. They nerve the arm of industry. They cheer the circle of domestic love. They give full scope to the energy of man, and are in entire accord with that delicacy, gentleness, and modesty which constitute the peculiar charm of woman. Let us adhere to them steadfastly,

calmly, and forever; for it is as true in philosophy as it is beautiful in poetry that

“Stillest streams
Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird
Which flutters least is longest on the wing.”

4. Christianity is reasonable in its ordinances. The Sabbath, baptism, and the Lord's Supper may perhaps be considered the three essential ordinances of the Gospel. The Sabbath! what has it not done for man? You can find no nation without the Sabbath who are not unintelligent, degraded, and vicious. Look at the pagan islands of the Pacific—at Africa, from the Mediterranean to the Cape. Look at China and Japan, and at the robber hordes who roam the plains of Central Asia.

You can find no people sacredly observing the Sabbath who are not temperate, industrious, and comfortable. In proof of this, contemplate the Highlands of Scotland, the rural villages of Old England, and the prosperous and energetic towns of our own land. You find, in every community, that the moral and physical condition of the people keeps pace with the observance of the Lord's Day; and when France, in her dark hour of infidelity, abolished the Sabbath, the result was so insupportably disastrous that the Chamber of Dep-

uties, as a measure of national safety, were compelled to reinstate its observance.

A wise man has said, "He who despises ceremonies knows not what he despises." Property of any value can not be conveyed from one to another without some ceremony of conveyance. A marriage union can not be consummated without some ceremony indicative of that sacred tie. A temperance society can not be formed without some outward pledge of membership.

And is it not reasonable, then, that our Savior, when gathering his disciples from an opposing world, and uniting them in the most sacred and indissoluble bands, should have instituted some simple ceremony as an outward pledge and expression of this union? And what rite can be more simple, appropriate, and affecting than the rite of baptism?

The convert to Christ stands in the Church of God, and, in the presence of all the people, makes public profession of his penitence, his trust in the Redeemer, and of his resolve, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to live henceforth a Christian life. The minister of Christ dips his hand into the font, and sprinkles his brow with clean water in the name of God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. How beau-

tiful this emblem of the sprinkling of the soul with the Savior's atoning blood! What can be more appropriate than this unostentatious rite?

Or, perhaps, cherishing different views, the little Christian band repair to a neighboring stream, hoping thus more closely to imitate the example of their Savior, who was baptized in Jordan. The officiating clergyman leads the disciple into the water, and, as he immerses him in the stream, the rejoicing young convert feels that, with Christ, he is buried in baptism from sin and the world, but to rise again from that watery grave in newness of life.

Or, perhaps, cherishing views still a little different, the young Christian is led a few steps into the stream, and kneels in the water. The minister, with a cup or with the hollow of his hand, in three outpourings upon his head, baptizes him in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, trusting that thus emblematically the influences of the Holy Spirit are poured out upon him.

Now, whichever of these modes is adopted in the consecration of the young convert to the Savior, who can fail to see its efficaciousness and its adaptation to impress the soul with a sense of the solemnity of the act and of the responsibility it thus assumes?

The Lord's Supper is another of the ordinances of the Gospel. The experience of the world has decided that, to perpetuate the remembrance of important events, there must be some commemorative celebration. We have our anniversaries and our jubilees. Human nature requires them. Is it not then reasonable that our Savior, who, by his sufferings and death, made atonement for the sins of the world, should establish some ordinance commemorative of that event, to keep in memory the great atonement which Christ has made and the duties consequent to his disciples?

And what rite could be more significant and efficacious than the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? It involves no ostentatious parade or burdensome expense. As the disciple partakes of these memorials of a Savior's love, the fountains of Christian emotion are unsealed, his thoughts recur to the scenes at Calvary, and gratitude inspires the exclamation,

"When I view my Savior bleeding
For my sins upon the tree,
Oh, how wondrous, how exceeding
Great his love appears to me."

Certainly the ordinances of the Gospel are reasonable.

5. Christianity is reasonable in its effects.

Look at this worldling, prayerless, Bibleless, godless, indifferent respecting his own eternal interests, and utterly regardless of that of his fellow-men. He becomes a Christian. What is the effect upon his character? He is a penitent for sin, and hungers and thirsts for righteousness. Love for God warms his heart. He establishes family prayer. He seeks to win his children and his neighbors to piety. He loves to associate with his Christian friends in the evening prayer-meeting and the Bible lecture, and strives in all ways to become conformed to the will of God.

Go with me to the dying chamber of this unbeliever. His threescore years and ten of toil and conflict are passed, and, in infirmity, poverty, and pain, he is now waiting to die. His wife and children have gone before him. They have perished, as he supposes, like vegetables and brute animals—passed away into annihilation; and he has no hope of ever seeing them again. The companions of his infidelity have either long since perished, or have abandoned him in these hours of gloom and suffering. In looking back upon the past there is nothing to cheer him. The present is all solitude and hopelessness; the future presents but the abyss of annihilation. He has no God,

no hope. Such is man without Christianity; for there is no one of my readers who will imagine that, if Christianity be false, there is any other religion which can be true. The more culture of soul, and warmth of affection, and elevation of nature such a man has, the more doleful is his condition. To use the beautiful verse of Campbell,

“There live, alas! of heaven-directed mien,
Of cultured soul, and sapient eye serene,
Who hail thee, Man! the pilgrim of a day,
Spouse of the worm, and brother of the clay,
Frail as the leaf in Autumn’s yellow bower,
Dust in the wind, or dew upon the flower;
A friendless slave, a child without a sire,
Whose mortal life and momentary fire
Light to the grave his chance-created form,
As ocean wrecks illuminate the storm;
And, when the gun’s tremendous flash is o’er,
To night and silence sink for evermore.”

Such is the condition of man, living or dying, without Christianity. The more noble his aspirations, and the more exalted his powers, the more deplorable is his doom. His glowing love, his fond memories, his powers of hope and anticipation, do all but add intensity to his misery. The pages of biography are filled with the melancholy developments of death-beds whence souls, unsustained by Christian-

ity, take the awful *leap in the dark*. Who can read without melancholy emotions the lamentation of the Greek poet, written more than two thousand years ago? As he compares the entire extinction of his being—to which he supposes himself to be doomed at death—with the perpetual renovation of nature, he exclaims,

“Alas! the tender herbs and flowering tribes,
Though crush’d by Winter’s unrelenting hand,
Revive and rise when verdant zephyrs call;
But we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
Bloom, flourish, fade, and fall; and then succeeds
A long, long, silent, dark, oblivious sleep—
A sleep which no propitious power dispels,
Nor changing seasons, nor revolving years.”

Sophocles, the most renowned of the Grecian dramatic poets, and almost equally renowned as a statesman and a philosopher, closed a career of eighty years, which the world has called brilliant, five centuries before the birth of our Savior; but, unenlightened by Christianity, there was no future opening before him, and, as he sank into the rayless grave, he left behind him the following pathetic testimony:

“Man’s happiest lot is *not to be*;
And, when we tread life’s thorny steep,
Most bless’d are they who, earliest free,
Descend to death’s eternal sleep.”

How differently from this does the Christian view time and eternity, death and the grave! As the martyr Stephen sinks, stunned and dying, beneath the stones hurled on him by his murderers, he sees the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. "Lord Jesus," he exclaims, "receive my spirit," and thus he falls asleep.

As Paul, at the close of a life so nobly devoted to the interests of humanity, saw the grave of cruel martyrdom opening before him, triumphant over the King of Terrors, he says, in a farewell letter to Timothy, his beloved son in the Gospel,

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing."*

And again this Christian man, as he beholds immortality unfolding so gloriously before him, in an exultant burst of rapture, which has echoed down through all the ages to the present hour, cries out,

* 2 Tim., iv., 6.

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Such is the effect which Christianity produces. A few years ago the writer of these pages was called to the dying bed of an aged and impenitent sinner. He had nearly numbered his threescore years and ten, and his gray locks hung thinly around his brow, furrowed by the cares of so long a life. By unremitted toil and rigid economy from his early youth he had acquired a fortune, and his treasured thousands were invested in the most safe and lucrative stocks. And now he was dying, and his only and spendthrift son was impatiently awaiting his father's death that he might grasp the hoarded gold.

Conscience, long silenced, had at last awoke as the hour of death drew near, and was reproaching him in her most remorseful tones. As I entered his chamber the wretched man looked up to me, with anguish visible in every feature, and abruptly cried out,

"O pray for me, pray for me! I am dying, and I am going to hell!"

Shocked at such a salutation, I endeavored

to guide the thoughts of the dying man to the Savior, saying,

“God is merciful. His very nature is love. He loves you, his child, so much that he has given his Son to die for you, to make atonement for all your sins. And now, even in this eleventh hour, all you have to do is in penitence to implore his forgiveness, and accept Christ as your Savior, and God will forgive you, and adopt you as his son and heir.”

“But I have rejected that Savior,” was the almost phrensied reply. “I have rejected him again and again, knowing that I was doing so. The Spirit has plead with me, and I knew that it was the Spirit’s pleadings, and yet I have grieved that Spirit away. I have sinned away the day of grace, and there is no more mercy for me. Oh, hell, hell, must I dwell in its devouring flames?”

“God assures us,” I rejoined earnestly, “that he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He loves all his children, and is infinitely desirous that all should return to him and be happy. Jesus has died for just such sinners as you are, even for the chief of sinners, and he assures you that whosoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out.”

“And that Savior,” the dying man exclaim-

ed, "I have rejected, denied, derided. I have known my duty, and yet would not do it. And now I have no heart to love God; I only fear his frown. I know that I am utterly unfit for heaven. I dread hell with unutterable horror, and yet I must go there."

Then, covering his head with his bed-clothes, the whole bed shook with the convulsions of his dreadful anguish. I stood overwhelmed with the painful scene, knowing not what to say or what to do. At length I said,

"My friend, shall I pray for you?"

"Yes," he energetically replied, "pray, pray; it may be that God will answer your prayers, but he never will, he never can hear mine."

I offered a short prayer, every sentence of which was interrupted by the groans of the dying man. The next day I called again. It was a clear, cold morning of winter, and the ground was covered with the frosted snow. As I entered the apartment of death, the scene was indeed changed. At midnight the despairing spirit had taken its flight in the tumult of its woe, and had ascended to the bar of God, there to answer for the mercies and the pleadings of threescore years and ten. The lifeless frame, sheeted for the grave, was cold and silent before me. On the next day the body was buried beneath the icy ground.

Such scenes are not rare. There are few ministers of the Gospel who have not witnessed them. But, from this painful spectacle, let me introduce the reader to another dwelling, where the Christian is dying—where death has lost its sting, and comes, a welcome messenger, to convey the immortal spirit to its celestial home. A mother, who has numbered but thirty years, and who has all the charms which earth can give clustered around her, is dying of consumption. Her husband, prosperous in his business, is able to gratify every desire of his family, and finds congenial spiritual joys with his devoted Christian wife. One little son and two daughters of great promise enliven their fireside.

The dying mother is in character every thing which husband, or child, or friend could wish. She is modest, warm-hearted, unobtrusive. Her mind is highly cultivated, her manners gentle, polished, and winning; and she is ever ready, with woman's delicate affection, to minister to the wants of others. The fireside of home, the chamber of sickness, the house of sorrow, are ever blessed by her sympathy.

But Consumption has marked her for his own. The hectic flush is on her emaciate cheek; and as she reclines upon her pillow,

fanned by the gentle southern breeze which enters the open window of her room, she looks upon the rose-bud blooming upon the shrubbery before her, and knows that before its leaves shall fall her body will be in the tomb.

As I one afternoon entered her chamber, when the hour of death was near, she turned to me, and with a smile, as if an angel from heaven dwelt in that dying frame, said,

"It is a very pleasant thing to die. God can take infinitely better care of my dearest husband and my dear little ones than I can, and I am so sure that he will order all in wisdom and love that I am full of happiness; and when my friends," she continued, "speak to my dear little children, after I am gone, about my death, I hope they will speak cheerfully and with a smiling countenance, that my children may have pleasant associations connected with my departure; for it is very pleasant, *very pleasant indeed*, to die and go home to heaven."

And now the hour has come for her to sleep in Jesus. She says to her mother, who was with her in this last scene,

"Will you call my dear husband and children, for I feel that I am dying?"

As, overwhelmed with grief, yet striving to

conceal their tears, they enter her chamber, she says,

"I feel that I am dying. I can not describe my sensations, for they are altogether peculiar; but in a few moments I am sure that my spirit will leave the body. Do not weep for me. It will be but a few days before I shall welcome you to that happy, happy home to which I am going, and then we shall be separated no more forever."

She presses the hand of her husband to her pale, thin lips, imprints a mother's last earthly kiss upon the fair foreheads of her weeping children, and, with such a smile as heavenly joy alone can awaken lingering upon her cheek, is gone.

Gone where? The angel messengers hovering around that bed have borne the spirit in resounding triumph through the skies. The acclamations of cherubim and seraphim have welcomed the advent of that redeemed immortal, as she mounts exultant on triumphant wing to her home in heaven. From the lips of all the angelic host there bursts the cry,

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Such are the effects which Christianity produces. Is not this a reasonable religion—rea-

sonable in its doctrines, its duties, its measures, its ordinances, and its effects? What excuse, then, reader, can you have for not regulating your life by its teachings? Perhaps every one who reads this book will say,

“I do perfectly know that all this is true, and that I ought to embrace this religion, and live for heaven.”

You know your Master's will. How can you then venture to disobey it? The Bible is a plain book, and conscience pleads its truths, and yet the proud heart refuses to submit to Christ. It is a terrible position for one to be in, the position of open defiance to the authority of God. Can this unnatural rebellion long continue as now? It can not. God's forbearance will not last forever. His spirit will not always strive. Heaven's gates are now open. Many with joy are entering in. Soon the door will be shut; and where will you then be, impenitent sinner? In outer darkness, in weeping and wailing, in hopeless and eternal despair.

CHAPTER XII.

THE VOICE OF PROPHECY.

External Evidences of Christianity.—Edom in its Power.—Prophetic Denunciations.—Utter Desolation.—Testimony of Volney.—Burckhardt and Seetzen.—Grandeur of the Ruins.—Petra.—Testimony of Laborde.—The Traveler Stephens.—Sublimity of Solitude and Decay.—Scenes in Ancient Petra.—Appeal to the Reader.

THOUGH it be the inward witnessing of the soul to the power and the truth of Christianity which constitutes the essential evidence upon which all Christian hearts place their reliance, still there are lines of purely intellectual evidence in the highest degree logical and convincing. These external arguments are so irrefutable that thousands of men, of the most exalted mental powers, have been constrained to give their assent to Christianity intellectually, even while unwilling to submit their hearts and lives to its sway. The proof, from external sources, of the divine origin of Christianity has signally triumphed over all the efforts of its foes. This triumph is so eminent that all

of the most powerful and intellectual nations on the globe have been thus constrained to become nominally Christian.

One of the most important of the external evidences in behalf of the Bible is to be found in the fulfillment of prophecy. Good men, the servants of God, speaking by inspiration, foretold with great minuteness events which should transpire long years after they had gone down into the grave. The accurate fulfillment of these predictions proves that they spake by inspiration, and that, consequently, whatever they said is to be received as a message from God.

The advent of the Savior, and all the important events of his wonderful life, were thus foretold nearly a thousand years before his birth. The fall of flourishing empires was not unfrequently announced with great minuteness of detail. One of the most remarkable of these predictions is that relating to the kingdom of Edom, or Idumea, as it was also called. The researches of modern travelers amid the ruins of past empires have brought to light facts which illustrate these prophecies, and show the astonishing accuracy with which they have been fulfilled.

The kingdom of Edom was an extensive

country east of Palestine. Three thousand years ago it was inhabited by the most powerful nation then upon the globe. Even in the days of Moses this kingdom was extolled for its wealth, luxuriance, and beauty ; its streams were fringed with verdure, and decorated with villages alive with the hum of happy industry ; its cities were gorgeous in architectural splendor, and rich in a commerce which extended throughout the then known world. Virgil sings the praises of its waving harvests and its metropolitan refinement and opulence. Lucan, another Roman poet, who wrote about the time of our Savior, describes it as one of the most proud, wealthy, and magnificent of Oriental empires.

As Edom lay on the direct route between the cities which lined the shores of the Mediterranean and the wealth of the Indies, two important Roman roads, solidly paved, had been constructed through the territory. It was, in fact, the great thoroughfare of the world's commerce, ever thronged by companies of merchants and by long lines of caravans. These pavements often resounded with the tramp of the legions of the Cæsars, and with the rumbling of their enginery of war. The ruins of its cities, which still retain imposing but mel-

ancholy grandeur, having survived the lapse of two thousand years, prove that it was entitled to the pre-eminence which it claimed over all the East in its massive and enduring architecture.

Such was ancient Edom. While in this condition of fertility, of prosperity, and of high civilization, and while causes were in operation to render its downfall apparently impossible, the prophets of God announced openly to Edom and to the world the following denunciations:

“Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah—therefore, thus saith the Lord God, I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman. Thou shalt be desolate, O Mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it.”*

“For my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and a great slaughter shall be in the land of Idumea. From generation to generation it shall lie waste, and none shall pass through it forever and ever; but the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it, the owl and the raven shall dwell in it. And he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of empti-

* Ezekiel, xxv., 12; xxxv., 15.

ness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof. And it shall be a habitation of dragons and a court for owls.”*

“For lo! I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill. Though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Also, Edom shall be a desolation. Every one that goeth by it shall be astonished.”†

Such were the denunciations against Edom, when no human foresight could have predicted its downfall, but when, on the contrary, all earthly influences seemed to tend to its aggrandizement. Let us now see how the lapse of time has wrought out the fulfillment of this prophecy. For many ages Edom, having crumbled to decay through the agency of the sword, pestilence, and famine, remained in such a state of desolation that no traveler was able even to visit it. Centuries lingered away, while ser-

* Isaiah, xxxiv.

† Jeremiah, xlix.

pents crawled through her mouldering palaces, and brambles choked her thoroughfares, and the wailings of the storm alone disturbed the silence of her deserted chambers. Even as late as the time when Bishop Newton wrote his dissertation upon the prophecies no information could be obtained respecting that country; but the enterprise of modern travelers has braved the perils which environ the doomed land, and has opened to the world amazing developments of the minute truth of prophecy.

Volney was the first who called public attention to Edom. He was an infidel. Being but slightly acquainted with the prophecies of the Old Testament, he was not at all aware that in the developments he was making in his "Ruins of Empires" he was but confirming that faith which he wished to destroy. He endeavored thoroughly to explore the country, but all his efforts were in vain. After surmounting innumerable difficulties and braving many perils, he could force his way no farther than to the borders of the desolate region, and contented himself with reporting the stories he had heard from the vagabond Arabs, who had prowled over its burning sands. This great thoroughfare of the world's travel—these paved roads, which for ages had been thronged with

merchants, and travelers, and richly-freighted caravans, and which had echoed with the tramp of Rome's military legions, were now closed impenetrably by desolation and dangers. How striking the fulfillment of the prediction,

"From generation to generation it shall lie waste, and none shall pass through it forever and ever!"

"No traveler," says Volney, "has yet visited Edom; but it well merits such an attention; for, from the report of the Arabs, there are to the south of the Red Sea upward of thirty cities absolutely deserted."

"Thy cities," said the prophecy, written more than a thousand years before, "shall be desolate."

"The Arabs," continues Volney, "sometimes make use of the ruins to fold their cattle, but in general avoid them, in consequence of the enormous scorpions or dragons with which they swarm."

The prophecy says, "It shall be a habitation of dragons."

It is with extreme difficulty and danger that any traveler, even now, penetrates this region. Many have attempted it in vain. Others have but cautiously entered the doomed land, and

have then been compelled to flee precipitately from its accumulating perils. The renowned Oriental travelers Burckhardt and Seetzen have explored this blighted realm perhaps more thoroughly than any others, and the account which they give of the sublimity of its desolation corroborates the words of the prophecy down even to the minutest particulars. The whole region they found to present an entire aspect of solitude and abandonment, with the exception of but one place, which contained a few straggling, starving inhabitants. That place was Teman.

The prophecy says, "I will make thee desolate from Teman."

In the interior of this country, thus blighted by the denunciations of an offended God, they found the ruins, the magnificent ruins, of probably the most wonderful city ever known upon this globe—the ancient Petra, the once world-renowned metropolis of this populous and powerful empire.

In a vast, gloomy ravine, surrounded by precipitous, sun-blackened, storm-drenched cliffs, they discovered the remains of this city—remains which had been buried for ages; not, like those of Herculaneum and Pompeii, beneath the ashes and lava of Vesuvius, but buried still

more sublimely in the silence and solitude of the desert, where the sun glared through the long autumnal day, and the storm, unheard by human ears, howled through the black night; where summers and winters came and went, and century after century lingered away, and no voice was heard there, and no foot pressed pavement or hall.

Awe-stricken, the travelers gazed upon houses, temples, palaces, hewn out of the solid rock. A theatre was discovered, chiseled into the cliff, capable of containing three thousand spectators. There were halls, and chambers, and corridors, embellished with every variety of architectural ornament. Statues, columns, and entablatures, gorgeously carved, glittered in the sunlight upon the façade of the precipice at all heights from the level of the valley up to an elevation in the clefts of the rock which appeared utterly inaccessible.

In one of these excavated residences there was found a banqueting hall sixty feet in length, and of proportionate breadth. There were saloons for revelry, and chambers for repose. There were warerooms for the merchant, and stables where Splendor housed her chariots, and where the proudly-caparisoned steed pawed and neighed. How strikingly do

these discoveries illustrate the otherwise obscure prophecy,

“O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill, though thou shouldst build thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down!”

Subsequently this wonderful region was visited by Irby and Mangle. They also entered the silent streets of Petra. Their account minutely confirms the statements of their predecessors. They record that the base of these precipitous cliffs was wrought out in all the symmetry and regularity of art; with colonnades, and pedestals, and ranges of corridors, adhering to the perpendicular surface of the cliff and rising to the clouds. They ascended long flights of steps chiseled out of the rock, and which conducted to apartments where the eagle loved to wing its flight and build its nest.

Some of the excavated residences, ample in dimension and gorgeous in embellishment, had evidently been the home of opulence and luxury. In others, more humble in size and aspect, the artisan had toiled, and slept, and ate his frugal fare. The rocks were hollowed out into innumerable chambers of different dimensions, whose entrances were variously, richly,

and fantastically decorated with every imaginable order of architecture.

Thus stand, at this hour, these deserted halls. No human being lives in them or near them. Three thousand years ago opulence and fashion filled those dwellings, and the world's busy clamor and loud gayety resounded through those thronged streets. In those luxurious halls, then gorgeously furnished, brilliantly illumined, and echoing with music's voluptuous swell, young men and maidens met, with sanguine hopes, and bright imaginings, and throbbing hearts. The joy of the bridal was there. The tears and sobbings of the dying chamber were there. The tide of active life, in never-ending ebb and flood, surged along those polished pavements. But God had said,

"Edom shall be a desolation—no man shall abide there."*

Withered by the doom, life disappeared. Solitude and silence commenced their reign. Lingered ages then rolled over the desolated realm, while no footfalls were heard in street or hall, save when the roving Arab looked in upon them, and, frightened by their sepulchral silence, hastened away.

The prediction respecting the downfall of

* Jeremiah, xlix., 17.

this doomed empire extended even to the most minute details. The pen of the *historian* could hardly describe the present condition of desolate Petra more accurately than it will be found to be described by the pen of the *prophet* in the Old Testament.

"But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it—and thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be a habitation of dragons and a court for owls—there shall the vultures also be gathered."*

"The cormorant," says Burckhardt, "is met in immense numbers. They fly in such large flocks that the Arab boys frequently kill two or three at a time by merely throwing a stick among them."

"Eagles, hawks, and owls," say Irby and Mangle, "were soaring above our heads, seemingly annoyed at any one approaching their lonely habitation."

"The thorns," says Laborde, "rise to the same height with the columns; creeping and prickly plants hide the remains of the works of man. The brambles climb to the tops of the monuments, grow upon the cornices, and conceal the base of the columns."

* Isaiah, xxxiv., 11-15.

"The scorpions," says Volney, "still called fiery, from the terrible inflammation of their bite, are so numerous that the Arabs avoid the ruins in consequence of the multitude with which they swarm."

There are generally associated with mouldering ruins, which bear the impress of uncounted centuries, emotions of awe and reverence. The spirits of the departed people them, and we wander through vaults, saloons, and turreted chambers venerating the grandeur and sublimity of decay. But God had said,

"I will make thee despised among men."*

And Laborde testifies that the Arabs give to these ruins a ridiculous and indecent name. Thus, in unnatural correspondence with the prediction, the semi-barbaric prowler over the desert points to these awful memorials of the past with derision and scorn.

"He shall stretch forth upon it," writes the inspired penman, "the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness."

How graphic does this language, otherwise obscure, now become when we see these massive dwellings, hewn out of the solid rock, empty and desolate, and fragments of columns, and huge stones scattered over the foundations of

* Jeremiah, xlix., 15.

long lines of buildings, and over the vestiges of paved streets. The darkness of the prediction is illumined by the blaze of its fulfillment.

Our own illustrious traveler, Stephens, has visited Petra. "I would," he writes, "that the skeptic could stand, as I did, in the midst of the ruins of this city among the rocks, and open the sacred books, and read the records of the inspired penman, written when this now desolate place was one of the greatest cities in the world. I see the scoff arrested. His cheek turns pale, his lip quivers, and his heart quakes with fear as the ruined city cries out to him in a voice loud and fearful as that of one risen from the dead. Though he would not believe Moses and the prophets, he believes the handwriting of God himself, in the desolation and eternal ruin around him."

Such is a brief exhibition of one of the most modern developments of the fulfillment of prophecy. There is thus opened to us in these later ages of the world a new leaf of demonstrative evidence of the truth of revealed religion.

Thousands of years ago God caused the mausoleums of the Pharaohs to be reared, and had chiseled into the solid rock of those stupendous fabrics the history of Egypt, where ev-

ery eye could see those mysterious hieroglyphics—so mysterious, so inexplicable, that subsequent interpolation or forgery became physically impossible. He then allowed century after century to pass slowly over them, while the generations which came and disappeared gazed in ignorant wonder upon the unknown symbols; and now, after the lapse of four thousand years, God has caused these hieroglyphics to be deciphered, thus compelling sculptured pyramid, mausoleum, shaft, and obelisk to testify, beyond the possibility of a doubt, to the authenticity and the veracity of the ancient Scriptures.

The same divine wisdom guided the artisans of Edom in their labor of ages, while hewing from the flinty rock the imperishable chambers of Petra, and decorating them with carvings and statuary, and every variety of architectural ornament, to be the irrefutable evidence, through all time, of the opulence and the power of those who once inhabited these dwellings; and then he swept their countless population into the ocean of oblivion; and then he surrounded these massive works with the solitude and the silence of the desert; and then he swept long centuries over them of utter desolation; and now he has brought them out to

the view of the astonished world, and we find in the Bible their history, their doom, their pristine splendor, and their present decay so minutely recorded as to afford new and miraculous evidence of the truth of God's Word.

It is thus that God has carefully strewed the evidences of revealed religion along the path of time. It is thus, as Newton has beautifully expressed it, that "prophecy is a growing evidence." All along the track of the ages which have passed away, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies has been shedding abroad the light of its resistless argument in attestation of the divine authority of the Bible; and there are now many prophecies in the obscurity of unfulfillment whose elucidation may be reserved for the benefit of generations yet unborn.

Reader, let your thoughts turn back, through the lapse of centuries, to the time when the metropolis of Edom was in the meridian of its glory. Think of the pleasure-parties sauntering upon those cliffs in the evening moonlight, who trod those marble floors in the dance, and caused those fretted arches to resound with shout and song.

Young men were there, enterprising, full of hope, rejoicing in prospective opulence and

fame; the sanguine student, with his high aspirations; the devotee of pleasure, with flushed cheek and lustrous eye; the pure and the impure; the serene disciples of duty and the victims of the "fury passions," those "vultures of the mind."

There was the maiden, in youth, gracefulness, and beauty, with her unfurrowed brow glowing with the excitement of the evening song, of the heartfelt laugh, and of all those secrets of the young heart's affections—of love, envy, jealousy, hope, and fear. There was fashion, elated with her new attire of Eastern jewels and of purple dye. There was the equipage of titled nobility and of hereditary wealth—young spendthrifts squandering the fortunes which their fathers had amassed, and looking scornfully upon the prosperous and the ambitious emerging from obscurity. There were merchants accumulating wealth, and, in all the pageantry of ostentatious life, ministering to the proud desires of sons and daughters; and there were other merchants, pale and careworn, sleepless and appetiteless, in apprehension of the approaching pay-day unprovided for.

Idumea's far-famed capital contained just such hearts—each one a busy world in itself—

as are now in our cities and villages agitated with the hopes and fears, the joys and griefs, of this tumultuous life.

But where now are Edom's youth and beauty? Where now are her sanguine young men, her mirthful maidens, her nobles, her rulers; her shouting, joking, carousing populace? All, all are gone. The last death-groan has been heard. The last funeral procession has disappeared. The very tombs Time has emptied. Not even a skull-bone, with eyeless sockets, can be found to tell that here was once a scheming, exulting, weeping man. The winds of twenty centuries have swept Edom's deserted streets and empty sepulchres, and the countless multitudes who there once toiled, and loved, and hated, and died, have gone to their final account, and are now reaping their eternal recompense.

But, reader, in narrating the history of Edom's departed inhabitants, what am I doing but announcing your doom and that of us all? The lapse of a few years will consign each one of us to the same oblivion which has rolled over them.

Young men and maidens, time is sweeping its dark billows over you. The very graves and tombs in which your bodies are to mould-

er to the dust will soon perish. The prosperous man, and the care-worn, toil-worn son of disappointment and sorrow, will soon be as far removed from all that is adverse or propitious here below as are the former inmates of the mansions of Petra. The young mechanics, inspired with the ardor which seems to inspire every thing in this energetic republic, will soon go to join their brethren who hewed the temples and the chambers out of the eternal rocks of Idumea. We shall soon all be gone. Every revolving year thins our numbers. Comparatively frail as are our dwellings, long before the hand of time shall tear them down, our death-groan will be heard, and the child of the stranger will play at our doors. Oh wonderful world—but a cradle and a grave!

“So live that, when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go, not like the quarry-slave, at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him,
And lies down to pleasant dreams.”

CHAPTER XIII.

OLD TESTAMENT CHRISTIANS.

The Babylonish Invasion.—The Captives.—Daniel.—The first Trial.—The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar.—Moral Courage of Daniel.—Belshazzar's Revel.—Daniel's Heroism.—Character of Daniel.—Noah.—Age of the World at his Birth.—His Trials.—His wonderful Firmness.—State of the World.—The Deluge.—New Temptations.—Noah's Fall.—Lessons taught.—Veracity of the Bible.—Probation.—Future Judgment.

THE Christian of the present day looks back, through a period of eighteen hundred years, to the time when our Savior made atonement for sin upon Calvary; and at the sacramental table he is continually reminded of that body broken for sin, and of that blood shed for us.

The believer, previous to the advent of Christ, looked forward through the centuries before him to the Savior, as we now look back through the centuries which have passed away; and in the victims continually bleeding upon the altars of Israel, he was ever reminded of the Lamb of God who was to take away the sins of the world. He probably had not the clear concep-

tion we now have of the atonement by the promised Messiah, for the fulfillment of prophecy always sheds much light upon its announcement. Still, the faith of the Old Testament saint was essentially the same with that of the more modern disciple of Jesus, and his life of piety, in its temptations, and struggles, and aspirations, was identical.

I wish now to present to the consideration of the reader the character of Daniel, as one of the Christians, if I may thus anticipate the *name*, of the Old Testament, and as one of the most noble of men, and the most worthy of imitation of any whose biography is to be found in either sacred or profane annals.

About six hundred years before the birth of Christ, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, marched with an invading army to Jerusalem, besieged the city, battered down its walls, and led away many thousands of its inhabitants into captivity. Chained two and two, this long train of weeping prisoners was driven at the sword's point over the mountains and through the valleys of Mesopotamia into hopeless slavery. Among these captives was Daniel, a young man about eighteen years of age. He was of noble, if not of royal birth, of very attractive personal appearance, of high intellec-

tual endowments, and animated by inflexible integrity.

Nebuchadnezzar gave orders that there should be selected from the prisoners a few young men, who, from their personal beauty and their intelligence, were best fitted to be ornaments to his court, and they were to be fed with the most luxurious viands of meats and wines from the king's table.

Daniel was among the first selected, and we immediately see a development of his decisive and upright character. He refuses to drink the king's wines and to pamper himself with the luxuries of the royal board, but persists in the frugal fare, of pulse to eat and water to drink, to which he had always accustomed himself. When we consider his youth, and the strong temptation which surrounded him in this voluptuous court, we must regard this as a rare instance of self-control.

Nebuchadnezzar, who, in the pride of his power, was totally unmindful of God, dreamed a dream which greatly troubled him. His wise men in vain endeavored to interpret it. Daniel was sent for. He entered the presence of this imperious despot, who, by one word, could cause his head to be severed from his body, and with a kind and modest, yet firm

and fearless spirit, explained to him the dream, and announced to him the terrible decree of his offended Maker.

“O king,” said Daniel, “this is the decree of the Most High. They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling-place shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee eat grass like oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dews of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.”

Is there not here developed a noble spirit, when a young man and a captive ventures thus to address in warning one of the most capricious monarchs who was ever seated upon a throne? Virtue ever secures respect, and the dignity of Daniel’s character was such as to command the homage even of this crowned despot.

Nebuchadnezzar soon died, and was succeeded by Belshazzar, his son, a man utterly abandoned to profligacy. Soon after his accession to the throne, he threw open the halls of his palace for one of those scenes of debauchery

and carousal for which Babylon was far famed. From the illuminated apartments the uproar of intemperate festivity swelled upon the midnight air, as the profligate revelers, male and female, of that corrupt court, fanned the flames of ungodly passions.

In the midst of the uproar, when the song, and the wine, and the sensual dance had raised the excitement to the highest pitch, Belshazzar ordered the sacred goblets, which had been taken from God's temple in Jerusalem, to be brought to the feast, to be filled with intoxicating wine, and then he and his godless associates drank in derision of Jehovah, and in honor of their idol gods.

Then God, in silent majesty, interposed. A supernatural hand appeared upon the wall. Every eye was arrested. Every cheek turned pale, as the blood rushed back upon the palpitating heart. Slowly and solemnly that awful hand, with its pointed finger, in letters of blazing light, traced upon the wall the mysterious words, "*Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.*"

The silence of death succeeded the orgies of drunkenness and revelry. Sobered by terror, the guilty carousers dispersed, and Belshazzar was left alone, with his wives and his concubines, in an agony of fear. One after another

the wise men were sent for to interpret these fearful symbols of an unknown doom. Their attempt to decipher them was, however, in vain.

Daniel was then summoned — Daniel, who had kept aloof from all the godless merriment of this wicked court. Serene and fearless this prophet of God entered the presence of the king, and thus addressed him :

“Thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of Heaven. And the God, in whose hands thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified. This is the interpretation of the writing. ‘God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.’ ”

That very night the armies of Darius made an irruption into the city. The streets of Babylon ran red with blood, and the lifeless body of Belshazzar was left weltering in its gore.

Darius now ascended the conquered throne, and, discerning the greatness of Daniel’s character, promoted him to the highest posts of office and honor in the state. His elevation excited the envy of others, and they plotted his ruin. Darius was persuaded to issue a decree

that whosoever should ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of the king, should be cast into the den of lions. They now felt certain of his destruction. They knew that Daniel would not live a day without praying to the God of Heaven, and they knew that the laws of the Medes and Persians were absolutely unalterable. But look again at the calm, heroic integrity of this wonderful man.

“Now when Daniel knew,” it is recorded, “that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.”

There was in this act no spirit of defiance or bravado, but a calm decision of character, which commanded the admiration even of his enemies. Darius would gladly have saved him, but the law could not be disregarded. Daniel was cast into the lions' den. The king passed the night in sleeplessness and mental agony. Early in the morning he hastened to the den, and, with a loud yet trembling voice, cried out,

“O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy

God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"

To his great joy, he heard the voice of Daniel coming up from the darkness of the den, exclaiming,

"O King, my God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me."

This exhibition of integrity and heroism in the character of Daniel, with the accompanying protection God had afforded him, so deeply impressed the mind of the king that he issued a decree, to all the people under his government, declaring that the God of Daniel was the true God, and, as such, was forever to be worshiped.

This is one of the most illustrious examples of Christian decision which has ever been recorded. Oh, Daniel, Daniel, would that there were more to emulate thy virtues! Tradition says that after these events Daniel continued, in comparative tranquillity, to discharge all the duties of his eventful life till he was ninety-one years of age. His noble spirit then ascended to join the sacramental host of God's elect.

Such was Daniel—one of the greatest, most heroic, and best of men. In youth he was magnanimous, decided, and consistent in his

piety. In old age he was venerable in virtue, commanding the reverence even of the voluptuous courtiers who trifled away their lives in the dissipation of a Persian court.

We look upon him as a young man, and he has none of the frivolity of youth. The sparkling wine of Nebuchadnezzar is presented to his lips in golden goblets, and he dashes the enchanted cup from him, and makes cold water his only beverage. Belshazzar's court resounds with wassail, and every thing that is fascinating in female beauty, in masculine wit, in costly adornment, lends its attraction to lure the hearts of the young and sanguine to godlessness and sin.

And yet Daniel, nursed in the lap of affluence, courted by the king to share the festivities of his palace, qualified by his talents, his dignities, and his commanding person to move as one of the brightest and most envied in that gilded throng, resists the almost resistless temptation, and maintains his religious principles irreproachable. No blandishments can lure him into these dissolute scenes. Three times a day, morning, noon, and evening, he goes into his chamber, and, without ostentation and without disguise, seeks and obtains, through prayer, the strength he needs. The king upon his throne

feels the reproof of his piety, and trembles before his youthful captive as he warns him of his sins.

Is not this a noble character? Does it not command universal reverence? If you, reader, are yielding to every trivial temptation, floating along upon the currents of the world wherever those currents may drift you, without moral courage to do what conscience and God's Word demand, how can you stand, in the day of judgment, by the side of Daniel? He could resist the fascinations of the most voluptuous court the world has ever known. He could go into the presence of the haughtiest of Persian and Babylonian monarchs, and warn them of their sins, and yet with a spirit so modest and a heart so replete with benevolence as to disarm them of their rage. And will you, reader, be like a bubble upon the wave, with no motion, no character of your own? Will you glide through life as others may guide you, hoping for heaven without taking up your cross, hoping for victory without conflict? It is a vain hope, and terrible will be your disappointment.

And you who have chosen Daniel's God for your God, and Daniel's religion for your religion—you who, by the grace of God, have

taken up the Cross of Christ, and separated yourselves from the frivolities of a sinful world—you who are striving to resist temptation, and to live for heaven, let the magnanimity, the heroism, the moral courage of Daniel animate you. Live as he lived in your various spheres of duty, that you may die as he died, and may ascend to join him in that world where the spirits of the just are made perfect.

Where now are those young men of Babylon who ridiculed the religion of Daniel, who sneered at those scruples of conscience which forbade him to quaff the wines and to join the revelers in the godless saloons of the palace? One after another they have laid down upon a bed of pain, and struggled, and groaned, and died. Their bodies have returned to the dust, and their spirits have been arraigned before God's bar, and have heard their doom.

And where now are those guilty, haughty maidens and dames, who in the midnight revels of Belshazzar's palace forgot God, and death, and judgment, and eternity? Their song is hushed. The worm of the grave has fed upon their once blooming cheeks. They threw away the precious moments of probation, and have long ago answered for their guilty lives at the bar of God.

And where, in a short half century from now, shall we all be? There are fearful scenes close at hand through which we all must pass—death, the grave, the resurrection morning, the world's conflagration, the great white throne, the final trial, the verdict of condemnation or acquittal, never to be reversed. Are you, reader, prepared for these scenes? This is the one great question which probationary life, with all its joys and griefs, is to settle. The path of duty is plain, and salvation is sure to all who will walk in that path.

From Daniel let us turn back to Noah. It is impossible to appreciate the character of this illustrious man without reflecting upon the state of the world at the time in which he lived.

When Noah was fondled, an infant, upon his mother's knee, the world was a little more than a thousand years old. Adam had been dead about two hundred years. There were probably thousands then living who had seen Adam, and who had heard from his lips the story of Paradise and of the fall. The tradition of a thousand years then might have been as distinct and vivid as the history of fifty years now.

Adam lived until he was nearly a thousand

years old. He was then the veteran and the venerable father of uncounted millions; and he looked back through the momentous events of nearly ten centuries, with a recollection of the past probably as clear and minute, as that with which he who now lives to the age of threescore years and ten retraces the scenes of his childhood and youth.

From the hour of Adam's ejection from Paradise mankind had been constantly and rapidly degenerating. The worship of God had become almost entirely neglected. Sin had attained such universal sway—rioting, and revelry, and the surrender to every passion had gained such entire dominion over a degenerate race, that but one pious family was left on earth.

Noah and his children were probably the butt of unmeasured ridicule. The spirit of irreligion is essentially the same with all nations and at all times. Whether we go to the saloons of the Palais Royal, or to the court of Charles the Second, or to the savages of Sumatra, or to the world before the Flood, we find the habits of an ungodly life proceeding from and developing the same corrupt heart.

As intemperance is the same vice whether caused by the most costly wines or the most

poisonous drams; as gaming is the same deadly passion whether practiced in illuminated halls and on polished marble, or with haggard beggary in the most gloomy cellars of degradation, thus, all the world over, with the civilized man and the savage man, and in all ages of the world, before the Flood and since the Flood, the wickedness of man has assumed the same character, in the gratification of the same lusts and passions, only with different degrees of refinement in the external circumstances.

The human heart was then, as now, the same busy world of hopes, disappointments, and fears. The halls of the wealthy resounded with midnight carousals, and the abodes of the poor were made doubly wretched by low and groveling vice. With the exception of Noah and his family, the spirit of entire ungodliness so filled the world that God decided that the only remedy for this all but universal corruption was to bury the whole degenerate race in one common grave.

When God informed Noah of this his intention, Noah was six hundred years old. For six hundred years he had lived in the midst of all this iniquity, and yet had remained firm in his allegiance to God. The trials his faith must have encountered imagination can hard-

ly conceive. He must have been, in strength of mind, in inflexibility of principle, in decision of character, in cool and unwavering courage, one of the most extraordinary men the world has ever produced.

Out of the limits of his own family he could not find a single individual who would sympathize with him in his feelings—nay, probably but few who did not regard him as a hoary-headed fanatic, and who did not hate him for his refusal to unite in their dissipations.

The situation of a Christian missionary alone among a nation of savages must be trying in the extreme; but it can bear no comparison with the conflict in which Noah passed probably six hundred years. His neighbors must have resented the inflexibility of his principles as a living censure upon them. In all the haunts of vice and crime his name must have been buffeted about in low buffoonery and with vulgar jests; and probably the rich and the powerful, with conscience-smitten hatred, endeavored to treat him, now with studied contempt, and now with all the allurements of flattery, and all the solicitations of seductive politeness.

But neither blandishments nor frowns could seduce him. The united efforts of the whole

human race could not shake his allegiance. Without a friend but in his own family; without a supporter but his wife and his children, and they probably clinging to and hanging upon him for support; with temptation in every form crowding upon him from every quarter, not only year after year, but century after century, Noah still stood firm in his integrity. He remained a just man, perfect in his generation, and walked with God.

Where is the Christian now who can feel that he could safely pass through such a trial of his Christian character? Whose faith is so invincible that an opposing world, battling it for centuries, by stratagem, by storm, and by siege, could not vanquish it? There is a solitary grandeur, a majestic dignity, in the character of this wonderful man, to which it is not easy to find a parallel. Milton presents his likeness in the seraph Abdiel:

“Faithful found

Among the faithless, faithful only he.

Among innumerable false, unmoved,

Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,

His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;

Nor number nor example with him wrought

To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,

Though single.”

And when, in obedience to the divine com-

mand, Noah laid the foundations of his ark, surrounded by the insults of blaspheming infidels—as, morning after morning, and year after year, he went to his work, while riotous crowds gathered around in derision—while the philosophers of his time reviled him in cutting sarcasm, and in Bacchanalian songs his name was loaded with every indignity, Noah retained his constancy unshaken.

And when the awful hour for God's vengeance came, and the door of the ark was shut, and Noah, in his fragile retreat, heard the roar of the tempest mingling with the crash and the cry of a drowning world; as his ark rolled in the surges of the swelling flood; as, in midnight darkness, for forty days and forty nights his awe-struck spirit listened to the chaotic uproar of nature in convulsions—the careering tempest, the rushing waves, the crumbling mountains, and the explosion of heaven's heaviest thunders, what new inspirations of sublimity must have been conveyed to his heart! This was one of those scenes which no man, and, least of all, a man like Noah, could pass through without the expansion of every moral and intellectual power.

Noah, when he entered the ark, was probably the greatest and best man who had ever

lived on earth, Enoch perhaps not excepted; but when, after his five months' sojourn on the shoreless waters, he descended upon Mount Ararat, he must have made celestial acquisitions in every thing which could magnify greatness and goodness. As, from the summit of the mount, he looked down upon the solitary world, slumbering beneath the mists of the departing deluge—as, in the light of the awful present, he reflected upon the more awful past, he must have stood, like Ararat itself, firm in majesty of character, in inflexibility of will.

Noah and his family descended to the plains of the reclaimed world. His old trials had now passed away, but new and unforeseen ones stole insidiously and fatally upon him. With genial skies overarching him, and a virgin earth blooming in beauty around; with a soft clime lulling to repose, and no enemies to molest and no strong temptations to resist, he gradually remitted his vigilance, and, in the bowers of his vineyard, in dalliance with that seductive enemy which, though it may sparkle in the cup, at last stingeth like a serpent and biteth like an adder, even Noah fell.

Noah, the veteran of centuries—Noah, long tried and disciplined in the most severe school of self-control, after having successfully encoun-

tered and triumphantly overcome all the allurements and menaces of a godless world—the venerable patriarch, who now for probably more than eight hundred years had, through every trial, sustained a character spotless and unsullied, fell, overcome and disgraced by strong drink.

Oh, how must Satan have rejoiced in that sad hour which brought a stain upon the character of our revered forefather which time can never efface! With what fiend-like joy must he have exclaimed,

“I have now found a seductive power so insidious in its movements that it is potent in the overthrow of resolution as firm and virtue as consolidated as that of Noah.”

And how diligently, and how successfully, from that hour to this, has Satan plied this instrument of disgrace and ruin! After such a warning, it is folly indeed for any one to pretend that he can, without danger, tamper with intoxicating drinks. Reader, boast not of your power of resistance. Look at Noah—intoxicated Noah. He who had been tossed upon the billows of the Flood—he who had repelled temptation in every conceivable form for eight hundred years—*he* falls before the demon of strong drink, and lies upon the ground prostrate in intoxication.

Oh Noah, Noah, venerable father of a new race, we love thee, we revere thee, we admire the virtues of thy wonderful character, and therefore we must weep over thy melancholy fall. Even the contemptuous profligate dares to deride thee, and the debauched Bacchanal, in the inebriation of wine and wassail, exults that the lustre of thy virtues is dimmed.

And why did God permit the disgrace of his long-trying servant to be published to the world? Why could he not allow the memory of this one fall to be effaced by the grief and tears of Noah's subsequent life? The answer is plain. The veracity of the Bible is sustained by the spirit of inflexible truth which relates, with unsparing fidelity, the faults as well as the virtues of its brightest characters. And, again, it was needful that, through all time, the fall of Noah should be held up as a warning against dalliance with that most perfidious foe of reputation and happiness. Let no one who has heard the story of Noah's fall have the presumption to say that he can safely tamper with intoxicating drinks.

Noah survived the Flood three hundred and fifty years. In his boyhood he received instruction from the contemporaries of Adam, and when he died nearly twenty-five hund-

red years of this world's history had passed away.

This brief biographical sketch of Noah and his times contains the germ of much instruction. Most emphatically does it rebuke every weak spirit of conformity to the world. No matter what may be the temptations of one's business; no matter how godless may be those by whom one is of necessity surrounded, it is hardly possible that any one should now encounter the difficulties, temptations, and trials which Noah, for seven or eight hundred years, encountered and surmounted.

During all these centuries, in the midst of universal corruption, Noah walked with God. He remained, during all this time, in his integrity, as inflexible as the mountain upon whose brow rested the ark. And will you, reader, be as fickle as the vapors which creep up the mountain sides, which are wreathed into every fantastic shape, and which are blown hither and thither by every shifting wind? Will you be the creature of circumstances, and, like melted wax, receive any impression which others may see fit to stamp upon you? No! have principles of your own, and dare to avow them; and live up to them, though the whole world should combine in antagonism and in a chorus

of derision. This alone is true manliness. In Noah's long-tried virtue you may find a pattern and encouragement.

How often are the young dissuaded from a religious life because their associates revile, or, at least, disregard religion. Oh, humiliating confession! Shrink from known duty and renounce your God because scoffers and blasphemers deride and perish! Will you allow such persons to create your character and decide your doom? Dare to be singular. Be true in your allegiance to God, though all mankind should join in the revolt. Then, and then only, can you respect yourself; then, and then only, can you be translated to the abodes of the just made perfect. Then you can

“Smile at Satan's rage,
And face a frowning world.”

The history of Noah also demonstrates, as clearly as any truth can be demonstrated, that “after death cometh the judgment.” If it be true that there is no punishment beyond the grave—that all men, as soon as they die, are received to heaven with the welcome, “Well done, good and faithful servant”—then piety must have been to Noah the greatest of calamities. While the godless and vile were, in a moment, swept into the perfect peace and joy

of heaven, Noah, because he was God's friend, was left to encounter the storms of the Deluge, and to struggle three hundred years more with the toils and griefs of life. While bold blasphemers, too corrupt for amendment, and too bad to live, were translated to realms of the blessed, and were joining in the music of celestial choirs, Noah, because he was the child of God, was imprisoned in the tempest-tossed ark, and heard but the howlings of the storm. While those who had surrendered themselves to utter profligacy were suddenly removed from all temptation, and were introduced to the pure companionship of angels and archangels around God's throne, Noah, whose character then was without a stain, was left in this world to encounter temptations before which he was to fall, and which fall has left a stain upon his character, which for four thousand years has given exultation to the enemies of God, and which has caused God's friends to mourn.

We see in this life but the beginnings of the divine government. The mystery, the apparent confusion in which all things are now involved, will be hereafter elucidated and rectified. Faith finds the solution of life's mystery in the declaration of Scripture, "It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after this the judgment."

We are also taught by the life of Noah that the trials and conflicts of life are in all ages essentially the same. The Christian is prepared for heaven by temptation and discipline. He who would be the child of God must perseveringly press forward in the path of duty, remembering that salvation is promised only to him who shall endure to the end.

Reader, thou art a child of immortality. Life is but a vapor. After a few days you will be in the spirit land. Will you go there a Christian or a rejector of Christ? Every other question is trivial indeed compared with this.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NEW LIFE.

Andrew Jackson.—His Excuses.—Confession to his Pastor.
—The Protracted Meeting.—Conviction of Sin.—Ashamed
of Jesus.—Conversion.—Its Results.—Louis Philippe.—
Moral Training.—Madame de Genlis.—The Journal of
Louis Philippe.—Practical Directions.—Conclusion.

IN conclusion of this treatise, let me draw the reader's attention to the experience of two men of modern times who have left the impress of their characters upon the two continents on which they severally resided. Andrew Jackson was a man of marked character, by nature impulsive and passional in the extreme. During much of his life his soul was overawed by the grandeur of the world of spirits, and he frankly acknowledged his self-condemnation in allowing the transient things of this world to detract so much from his attention to the world to come. The pastor of the church which General Jackson attended while occupying the presidential chair in Washington informed the writer that he once called upon the President,

in a time of unusual religious interest, to converse with him upon his personal interest in religion.

“No man,” said General Jackson, “can feel the importance of religion more deeply than I do. I have again and again resolved to attend to the subject, but the cares of my busy life have induced me to postpone it. I promised my wife that, so soon as the election was over, so that I should not be accused of becoming a Christian in order that I might get votes, I would attend to the salvation of my soul. But now my cabinet is in such a state of contention that I have no time to think of any thing else. I am, however, determined, in the first moments of leisure I can find, to endeavor to prepare to meet my God.”

It was the old excuse—old as the days of Felix: “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.”

In 1838 he wrote to a friend who had addressed him upon this subject, “I would long since have made this solemn public dedication to Almighty God, but, knowing the wretchedness of this world, and how prone many are to evil—that the scoffer of religion would have cried out, ‘Hypocrisy! he has joined the Church for political effect’—I thought it best to post-

pone this public act until my retirement to the shades of private life, when no false imputation could be made that might be injurious to religion."

Still the old excuse, the heart deceiving itself. No one better knew than General Jackson that the hypocrite is the only one who needs fear the charge of hypocrisy. Sincerity has nothing to fear.

After General Jackson retired from the presidential chair to the Hermitage, two or three years passed away, when enjoying these "shades of private life," during which, though ever self-condemned, he still found no leisure to attend to the conversion of his soul.

Mrs. Jackson was a member of the little church which had been collected in the vicinity of the Hermitage, the President's rural residence in Tennessee. A protracted meeting was held in this church. President Jackson attended constantly these exercises, and his thoughtful, solemn air during all the services attracted general observation. The last sermon of the series was preached by Dr. Edgar, upon the "Interposition of Providence in the Affairs of Men."

The life of General Jackson had been one of unusual adventure and peril. He had encoun-

tered all the dangers of war, both savage and civilized. He had, in numberless instances, been rescued from death, as it were, by miracle. The Spirit of God seemed to rest with peculiar power upon the soul of the hearer, as he followed, with absorbing interest, the words of the preacher.

"How is it," exclaimed Dr. Edgar, "that a man can pass through such scenes unharmed, and not see the hand of God in his deliverance?"

President Jackson, when the services were ended, with a peculiarly reflective and solemn expression of countenance, entered his carriage, and was riding homeward when he overtook Dr. Edgar. Here again we see a wonderful development of the moral cowardice of the human heart. Nicodemus did not dare to go to Jesus by day, and stole along, through the shades of night, to seek a secret interview. Even General Jackson had not the moral courage to avow openly his interest in religion. He alighted from his carriage and requested Dr. Edgar to dismount for a moment from his horse, and then led the minister of Christ into a little grove by the road-side. Being thus out of the sight and hearing of others, he summoned courage to say,

"Dr. Edgar, I want you to go home with me to-night."

But Dr. Edgar had an engagement which he could not forego, and, notwithstanding the earnest and reiterated entreaties of President Jackson, he was compelled to decline. The President went home a convicted sinner, smitten by the Spirit of God. He immediately entered his chamber, and passed most of the night walking the floor in anguish of spirit and in prayer. The scenes of that night—its penitence, its supplications, its cries for mercy—are known only to his own soul and to God.

With characteristic decision of character, his resolve was speedily formed. The next morning was the Sabbath. In the little church at the Hermitage the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to be administered. The President announced to his wife and family his full conviction that he had repented of his sins, cast himself upon the Savior, and had been accepted of him. Assembling the elders of the church, he informed them of the new life upon which he believed that he had entered, and expressed his desire, *that very day*, to make a public profession of his faith in Christ, and to receive the memorials of his body broken for us, and his blood shed for our sins.

His case was a marked one—his character a marked one. He had already nearly approached his threescore years and ten. No fears could be cherished that he would prove fickle in his resolves, and, consequently, there was no hesitation in acceding to his request.

It was, indeed, a solemn scene which was witnessed that day, in that humble church, almost buried in the forests of Tennessee. The war-worn veteran, with bronzed face and frosted hair, knelt with the humility of a little child before the altar, in confession of utter guilt, in acceptance of pardon through faith in Christ, and was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

His subsequent life was that of the Christian who is conscious that his past sins are all forgiven, but who has yet many infirmities remaining, the growth of years, against which he must incessantly struggle. Family prayers were at once established in his dwelling, which the President himself conducted, however numerous, or whatever the character of the guests who might be present. He was for the remainder of his life an active member of the Church, devoting his energies to promote its interests; and when chosen one of the deacons, declined only upon the ground that there were

other brethren of far longer standing as Christians, who were much more worthy of that position of responsibility.

Andrew Jackson, in his earlier years, was a very wicked man. He was awfully profane. He was a duelist. His own impetuous and ungovernable will seemed to be his only law; but Christ, "who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," received the penitent, even at the eleventh hour. We can not doubt that he has now been washed from his sins in the Savior's blood, and that thus he has been presented "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

Louis Philippe, late King of France, passed through a stormy life, crowded with temptations, maintaining ever a character of moral purity rarely equaled. His father, the Duke of Orleans, was the richest man and one of the most illustrious nobles in Europe, being of royal blood. The duke, embracing the infidel philosophy then so much in vogue, as a natural consequence, surrendered himself to the most unrestrained indulgence in profligacy. His mother was a woman of sincere piety, and, with a broken heart, devoted herself to the education of her son.

Madame de Genlis, a woman distinguished

for her virtues and her high intellectual culture, was selected as the private teacher of the young prince. With cheerfulness and resolution, which indicated a noble nature, he pursued, under her guidance, a course of moral training which has given him a position in the history of the world among the purest and best of men. One of the modes by which Madame de Genlis taught her pupil to govern all his passions and to form his character upon the most exalted principles was carefully to review every night his actions during the day. To facilitate this self-examination, the following questions were written in his journal, which he every night read, and, with his pen, inscribed the answer to each one:

1. Have I this day fulfilled all my duties toward God my Creator, and prayed to him with fervor and affection?

2. Have I listened with respect and attention to the instructions which have been given me to-day with regard to my Christian duties and reading works of piety?

3. Have I fulfilled all my duties this day toward those whom I ought to love most in the world, my father and my mother?

4. Have I behaved with mildness and kindness toward my sister and my brothers?

5. Have I been docile, grateful, and attentive to my teachers?

6. Have I been perfectly sincere to-day, disobliging no one and speaking evil of no one?

7. Have I been as discreet, prudent, charitable, modest, and courageous as may be expected at my age?

8. Have I shown no proof of that weakness and effeminacy which is so contemptible in a man?

9. Have I done all the good I can?

10. Have I shown all the marks of attention I ought to the persons, present or absent, to whom I owe kindness, respect, or attention?

Every evening, before retiring to bed, the prince read these questions in the presence of his teacher, and to each one inscribed his answer. He then kneeled before God, and in prayer sought forgiveness for all his sins, and divine guidance. Such was the moral and religious training of one of the most illustrious and wealthy of the nobles of France when sixteen years of age. Under such training his maturity of character was even then such that he was an active colonel in a regiment of dragoons, and soon signalized himself in the terrible battles of Jemappes and Valmy.

Thousands of the young men of France who commenced life with him went down to ruin, swallowed up in the horrible vortex of French infidelity. During the Revolution his private journal was seized by the government and published. In one passage he says,

“Oh my mother, how I bless you for having preserved me from those vices and misfortunes into which so many young men fall, by inspiring me with that sense of religion which has been my whole support!”

Some persons may think that such self-discipline would take away from true manliness of character. But just the reverse is true. There is nothing which inspires the soul with such energy as that moral courage which enables one to dare to do right. Lamartine says of this young man,

“Louis Philippe had no youth. Education suppressed this age in the pupils of Madame de Genlis. Reflection, study, premeditation of every thought and act, replaced nature by study and instinct by will. At seventeen years of age the young prince had the maturity of advanced years.”

Madame de Genlis, in the following terms, speaks of her pupil, who then had the title of the Duke of Chartres. He did not attain the

title of the Duke of Orleans until after the death of his father.

"The Duke of Chartres was born with good inclinations, and he has now become intelligent and virtuous. Possessing none of the frivolities of the age, he disdains the puerilities which occupy the thoughts of so many young men of rank, such as fashions, dress, trinkets, follies of all kinds, and a desire for novelties. He has no passion for money; he is disinterested; despises glare, and is, consequently, truly noble."

If the young man who reads these pages has an honest desire to correct his faults and to develop a truly noble character, which shall win the esteem of man and the favor of God, the efficient mode for accomplishing this is here distinctly marked out. Copy the above questions, with such alterations and additions as may be suited to the peculiar temptations to which you may be exposed, and examine yourself every night, by reading them and answering them, before you sleep. You will thus "grow in grace, and increase in the knowledge of the truth." If you will but persevere in such a course as this, you will surely find penitence and the Savior. Take, for instance, the following questions:

1. Have I earnestly prayed to God to-day to forgive my sins, and to guide me to every duty?

2. Have I, with prayer, read God's Word, desiring only to know his will, that I might obey it?

3. Have I endeavored this day to abstain from every thing I thought to be wrong, and to do every thing which I thought to be right?

4. Am I now truly penitent for any failure in duty this day, and do I sincerely ask God's forgiveness?

Any one who can honestly at night answer these questions in the affirmative, and who perseveres in this course, *is a Christian*. It is not enough to say he will become a Christian; but if he have adopted this new life so that he will persevere in it "to the end," *he is already a Christian*. This is the spirit of Christ. This is that newness of life which regeneration introduces. But perhaps some one says, "In this experience I find no reliance upon an atoning Savior—no clear view of the great doctrines of grace."

Our Lord has said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." The way to please God is to begin with performing duty, not with studying doctrine. You may forever,

like the lost spirits whom Milton so forcibly presents to us,

“Reason high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate—
Fix’d fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute—
And find no end, in wandering mazes lost,”

and yet not make one single step in advance toward your heavenly home. Begin with duty—practical obedience—and you will have no trouble about doctrine. God, your Father, whose love you have sought, will be your teacher and guide. He will show you how sin has paralyzed your soul; how utterly helpless you are of yourself; how dreadfully the leprosy of sin has corrupted your nature; how essential it is that you should experience the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; and he will lead you to that Savior whom his love has provided; who “has borne your sins in his own body on the tree;” who has said,

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Reader, would you go to heaven? You must then commence a Christian life. Strive to obey God’s will so far as you can ascertain what his will is by the teachings of conscience and of God’s Word. Let me, then, entreat of

you, as an aid to the commencement of this Christian life, to prepare a series of questions adapted to your temptations and wants, and answer them every night before you sleep. These questions may be general or minute, according to your conviction of your own natural tendencies to err.

You may be constitutionally ambitious, or envious, or gloomy, or trifling, or selfish, or censorious, or morose, or irritable. Passion and appetite may have gained a perilous ascendancy over you. You may have indulged your tongue in habits of exaggeration and misrepresentation until the vice has become a second nature. Ruin will approach you on the side of your constitutional infirmities, and it is in that direction that you must throw up your intrenchments.

The battle against sin is a stern one, far more arduous than any ever waged against earthly redoubt. Defeat is irretrievable and endless ruin; victory secures for you honor, glory, and eternal life.

Reader, are you a Christian? Whatever your trials, be comforted. The storm of life will soon cease. The night of conflict and sorrow will soon pass away. Then the head and the heart shall ache no more. Heaven shall

be your home; angels your companions. Those loved ones, so dear to your heart, who have fallen asleep in Jesus, have but gone before you; they are waiting to receive you. The griefs which now pierce your heart shall but give new zest to future and endless joy.

“Not first the glad and then the sorrowful,
But first the sorrowful and then the glad.
Tears for a day, for earth of tears is full,
Then we forget that we were ever sad.”

Is there any unbeliever in God's Word who reads these pages, and says that all this is delusion? Cruel, cruel infidelity. Oh, rob us not of that only solace which remains for those crushed and broken hearts with which earth is filled!

The mother cries in anguish over her dying child. Merciless infidelity says, “Shriek louder and louder. Your agony is but as the howling of the wind. Your child has perished like the bubble that has burst. You shall never see it or hear from it again.”

The wife bends in agony over her dying husband; receives his last kiss of more than earthly love, and his last words, “Dearest, we shall soon meet again.” Cruel infidelity raises its demon laugh, and exclaims to the Christian mourner, comforted by this hope, “Fool, cast

away the delusion! Your husband has passed into nothingness, like the pig in the sty, and to the same nothingness you will soon follow him."

Oh Infidelity, thou art a fiend of darkness gloating over human misery! Let every friend of humanity say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Let us cling to our Bible, to our Savior, to our hopes of heaven. Here we find the only solace of earth's woes—and a solace often so rich and abounding! Here we find triumph in death. *Death* do I say?

"No! no! it is not dying
To go unto our God;
This gloomy earth forsaking,
Our journey homeward taking,
Along the starry road."

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